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88 APRIL

WHITE DWARF

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WHITE DWARF

ISSUE 88 APRIL 1987

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April is the traditional silly season for magazine editorials - the chance to tell the readers some outrageous whopper that has a ring of truth about it. I'm not going to do that at all. *White Dwarf* readers are more than bright enough to spot such an obvious ploy and ignore it.

So, I won't bother telling you that many of WD's staff are pixies (despite the fact that I can prove it), that a certain major games company is a front for the CIA *and* the KGB (no mean feat in itself) or that the entire gaming content of the magazine is going to be replaced by pictures of enormous... motorbikes. *And just what did you think I was going to say!*

You'd simply never believe any of that. Not in the April issue.

But perhaps you might believe that this issue sees the start of a wonderful new competition for *White Dwarf* readers. Each issue now contains a secret number of typographical errors - such as letters being swapped around. Count them up, and if this total is the same as the issue number of the cover of your copy of *White Dwarf* you could win this month's surprise star prize! Just to make the competition really exciting, each individual copy of *White Dwarf* will have a different number of mistakes.

Better than a silly Bingo agme, isn't it? And there's your first *free* typo! Everybody gets that one, though... Now all we need is somebody really delightful, attractive and charismatic to give away the prize.

Mike Brunton

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FREE THIS ISSUE: NEW CARDS FOR *CHAINSAW WARRIOR*

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OPEN BOX

CHAINSAW WARRIOR

Solo Boardgame
Games Workshop £12.95

An incredibly powerful extra-dimensional being has taken over an old building in New York and is threatening the whole city. Crack units have tried to stop the creature, and have been wiped out to a man. Now all that's left to save the Big Apple is the meanest and toughest Special Forces operative of all time. The Chainsaw Warrior. You.

All this is explained in an 8 page strip by Marc Gascoigne and drawn by Brett Ewins, which sets the scene for **Chainsaw Warrior** (the game) in a very visual and entertaining way. After that, all you need to do is play the game, on your own, of course, because this is a solo boardgame.

The 'other player' in the game is the game system itself, but rather than use the read-paragraph-go-to-paragraph system of *Fighting Fantasy, Chainsaw Warrior* uses cards to represent the opponents you must defeat.

The 168 *Talisman*-sized cards are the meat of the game. The 'House' cards cover the building as you explore it, and the inhabitants - zombies, mutants and other assorted nasties - that you can meet. The back of each House card tells you what you can see: a corridor, room, balcony etc and gives some sort of clue to what you might meet. Darkness, for example, the extra-dimensional New York-threatening being and chief baddy, is always in a room. The front of each card tells you what each location really contains. This could be nothing, some zombies, the Meat Machine (don't ask) or Darkness itself. There are also 'Wandering Zombie' cards to add spice to empty rooms. The Equipment cards are the devices and weapons you can carry into the house: the McDonnell Blaster, first aid kit, the eponymous chainsaw or whatever. The cards are attractive and functional - definitely among the best at capturing a 'feel' for a game subject, with a gritty, hi-tech look. The board also captures the same feel - and has the advantage that all the rules that you need to reference during play are on the board and the cards.

With all that lot, you take the part of the Chainsaw Warrior. With randomly generated personal statistics and a mix of equipment, you have to go into the house and do unto others before they do you. And there are a lot of others waiting to do you. Choosing the right balance of equipment is one of the more important decisions of the game. You are given a Laser Lance to defeat Darkness, and might get an Implosion Waistcoat to do the same job in a more suicidal fashion.

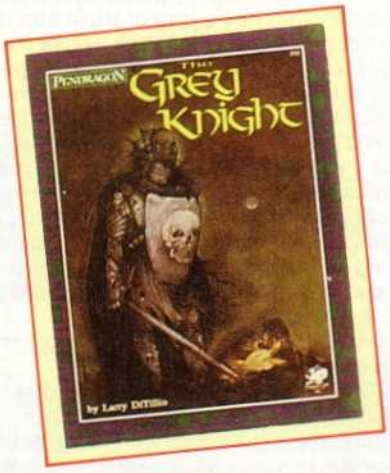
Chainsaw Warrior is a race against time. Each turn - and especially combat - eats away at the 60 game minutes you have for your task. Each turn has plenty of options for action, with encounters, traps and assorted forms of mayhem, but the clock is always running. Take too long and Darkness wins by default.

The game has a number of strengths. It's a solo game, which unusually for a boardgame, takes less 'real time' to play than 'game time'. With games that can take almost an hour for a turn that represents only seconds this is a pleasant change. *Chainsaw Warrior* is a game with a lot of decisions for the player - tactical decisions from turn to turn and long range strategic choices that have to be made. The card based system gives a game that varies every time it's played. I found myself 'having another go' all through the development process - despite the fact that I kept losing!

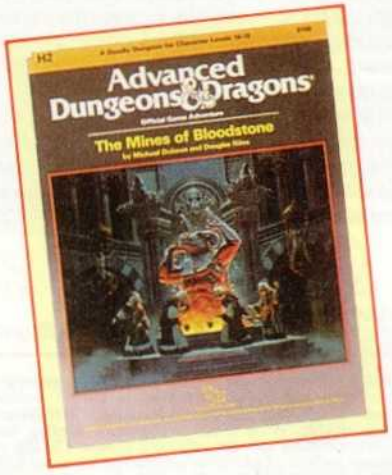
Ultimately, *Chainsaw Warrior* is an easy game to play - and a difficult game to win. Above all, it's a lot of fun!

Jervis Johnson

OPEN BOX
Reviews
White Dwarf £invaluable



THE GREY KNIGHT
Pendragon Adventure
Chaosium - £5.95



H2 THE MINES OF BLOODSTONE
AD&D Adventure
TSR £5.95

Erm. Hang on a minute, but how do you review a review column? The answer is, of course, that you don't. You look at the policy and attitudes behind **Open Box**: what makes the column the way it is, who gets to review games, and what they say about the games they review. Take Games Workshop products, for instance. They get good reviews in *White Dwarf*. So do other company's games. There is, however, always the nagging doubt in some suspicious minds that WD's reviewers might be biased when it comes to Games Workshop games.

Us? Biased? Surely not.

This is going to come as a terrible disappointment to some people but, yes, it's true. We are biased. In favour of quality.

Which may not sound like it has anything to do with why GW's games get good reviews, but hold on for a moment. Most of the people involved in *White Dwarf* are involved in games production for Games Workshop. This makes us less than objective when we review Games Workshop games - after all, we've probably worked on them ourselves, or share an office with the designer, writer or developer. 'OK', you cry, 'This just proves that you're saying nice things 'cos it's all your own work.' This is partly true, we'll admit that much.

However, that misses the most important point about why we include reviews of GW games - or even produce them in the first place. *We wouldn't be making games if we didn't think they were worthwhile.* By definition, if GW publish a game or an adventure, or produce a figure (or three), it's because we think it's a good quality item.

The bias towards quality is inherent in what we do. Nobody likes to think that they are wasting their time producing something that is less than good. It's impossible to be objective under those circumstances.

So we are going to stop printing traditional reviews of GW products. The question of whether the game is good or bad doesn't enter into the fact that it is mentioned in *Open Box*. The fact that the game is available means we think it's good. Read the 'reviews' in *OB* though. They will explain *why* we think it's good, and what makes the game worthwhile.

Other company's products are still going to be reviewed, of course. But we'll still be biased.

Biased in favour of quality.

Mike Brunton

I've admitted several times now that I think *Pendragon* is my favourite roleplaying game. It's time for a confession. Until recently, I was not sure that in the year or so since I started playing the Arthurian roleplaying game that I had been confident that I was playing the game in the way in which it was intended. No big deal, the motley band of people I adventure with and I have been having a great time, chasing the Grail, jousting, feasting, jousting, boasting of our jousting... Still, we thought, wouldn't it be nice to know that we were properly in the spirit of things, and that our version of *Pendragon* was something like what Chaosium had intended.

In short, wouldn't it be nice if there were a published adventure.

And now there is. **The Grey Knight** is the first adventure supplement for *Pendragon* and shows more than anything that this game is different from all the rest. This isn't going to be an over-the-top rave review, but I do think *The Grey Knight* is an excellent roleplaying adventure. The balance between cameo roleplaying, action encounters and player 'detective' work is just right. The Grey Knight of the title rolls up at King Arthur's Easter tourney in the company of The Lady In Black. She challenges Arthur to name a champion who is to fight the Grey Knight over the matter of the May Babies - an incident in which Arthur is supposed to have caused the death of all children born in one year on May Day, in an attempt to stave off an ill prophecy. No, it's not a job for the player characters, since Gawain takes up the gauntlet. The PCs' job is to find one of the Thirteen Treasures of Britain, a whetstone which will help Gawaine achieve his task.

They will journey to the Wastelands, and a mysterious Abbey, and then onto other perilous adventures in search of the magical stone. They have six weeks to complete their alloted task. By my reckoning this cannot help but be a close run thing, but success and failure in *Pendragon* are not measured in the same fashion as your AD&D type game. For once, getting your hands on the magical goodies might actually not be such a good thing.

The key to any *Pendragon* adventure is the roleplaying, since the code of chivalry and the way character is defined by the rules of the game makes it impossible to succeed as the normal selfish oaf with a broadsword. Also, one must accept the change in pace; you couldn't play this game with the same minute-by-minute intensity of most fantasy roleplaying games; those moments when the players are relaxing between fights, acting in character, are not just the finer points of the game, they *are* the game.

Pendragon is a very different game, and this is a very different kind of adventure. The plot might seem very linear to some, but then a properly chivalrous, honourable knight hasn't actually got that many choices to make. The generous notes in the margin make running the adventure fairly easy, although they might appear to diminish the value of the book; I think a clearer summary of the adventure for the GM would have been of more use. The few props are useful, and the artwork captures the romantic atmosphere.

The Grey Knight is the most useful addition to *Pendragon* so far, and helps set the tone for the game. A full campaign book with many more such adventures for a developing group of characters would be an even greater aid. As soon as the campaign aspects of the game are sorted out, I don't doubt that Pendragon will be the game I play to the exception of most others, and this small book is going to keep me going for quite a while, just for starters.

Paul Cockburn

Start off with a small, time-wasting set of village encounters. Send the PCs off in some inclement weather into a Big Valley, use this as a setting for more time-wasting encounters, and then get 'em into the **Mines of Bloodstone** for the real adventure. Bring out the *AD&D Battlesystem* for the cast-of-thousnads duergar-vs-svirfnebli splatterfest and populate other cavern locations with lots of monsters (50 carrion crawlers in one place, for example). The battle over, send the PCs into the demonic temple of the duergar, which is simply a super-killer zoo dungeon. Presto! That's how you write an *AD&D* adventure for PCs of levels 16-18.

This is just a gross dungeon bash. There is a tarrasque in the zoo (you know, the thing with AC-5, 300hp, and a *wish* requirement to kill) but in case that's not impressive enough there's a new monster with AC-10, 80 hit dice, that does 20d4 damage per hit! Wow! Other locations feature 50 shadows, 20 ropers *and* 30 piercers of the largest size, a beholder, a pair of huge old red dragons... a well-stocked zoo. Thrill as your PCs take on 910 hit dice of Undead in one chamber (including 70 energy draining monsters)! Gasp as you realise that this isn't even the climax of the adventure! Gasp again when the GM tells you that you can't even turn Undead in here!

The treasure haul is equally gross. One treasury contains just under *eight million* gold pieces equivalent, including five million in easily carried gems. Magical treasure is sprayed around like confetti.

Infuriatingly, this module never tries to get to grips with the real problems of play at this level - like how a GM should handle spells like *(limited) wish* and especially *gate*. Let's face it, any good cleric faced with a temple of Orcus on this scale is going to call in the deva-planetar-solar squad and quite right too. What's a GM to do? Further, as scripted, the adventure assumes the PCs attack the temple while the svirfnebli deal with the duergar. No way. You need the back-up of crack kamikaze gnomes to have any chance at all in there. It is obviously bad tactics to attack two sets of opponents simultaneously (dividing your forces) if you can take them on sequentially. But the script doesn't cover the latter option; it is just assumed that the PCs will go along with the suggestion of the svirfnebli and rush off to a swift death in the zoo.

I've given away a lot of the module detail (though not the climax; this is ultra-gross). Strong criticism requires justification in detail. This effort is the best argument I've ever seen for retiring high-level AD&D characters. Quite appalling.

John Saunders

MA2 AVENGERS COAST TO COAST
Marvel Super Heroes supplement
TSR £7.50

As expected, TSR have taken the arrival of *Advanced Marvel Super Heroes* as a reason to issue new game statistics for the vast number of Marvel characters in the original rules. About the only thing that can be said in their favour is that they've done a much better job of it second time around.

Avengers Coast to Coast is, as you might expect, a source book for players wishing to run characters from the Avengers super team. Unfortunately this is the American comic Avengers, not the British TV series. There's no Diana Rigg or Joanna Lumley in this.

For those who don't know, the Avengers are a semi-autonomous official law-enforcement agency. This gives rise to the most interesting parts of the book - the sections which deal with the Avengers' Charter and the group's relationship with the US Government. It also provides the excuse for the adventure, namely that the Avengers decide to franchise their operations and invite other heroes (the players) to apply for the position.

These sections, together with the superb plans of the Avengers' bases, transport and equipment, provide the basis for starting an *Advanced MSH* campaign based around a superhero group. However, it comprises only about half the book. The rest of it is taken up with vast numbers of descriptions of Marvel characters, many of whom have already been described in at least one of the various original *Marvel Super Heroes* products.

Pete Tamlyn

LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES
DC Heroes Supplement
Mayfair Games £6.95
PAWNS OF TIME
AN ELEMENT OF DANGER
DON'T ASK
DC Heroes Adventures
Mayfair Games £4.95 each

Here we go again, another giant jiffy bag is thrust into my arms by an angry postman and bursts asunder scattering dirty grey padding and *DC Heroes* adventure modules all over the lounge floor. Mayfair produce material for this game at such a rate that you'd think the company had a pathological hatred of trees. Alternatively, given the highly variable quality of their offerings, perhaps they are working on the infinite-number-of-monkeys-with-typewriters principle. The latest batch of releases is typically mixed.

We'll get the **Legion of Super-Heroes** out of the way first. Yes, it's another monster manual: page upon page of characters out of DC Comics reduced to game statistics and a brief biogrpahy. It's fascinating for comics experts, a must for fans of the characters featured, and a big yawn for the reviewer. The heroes in this particular offering are a confederation of teenage super beings from the far future. Being DC characters many of them have remarkably silly names: Matter-Eater Lad, Lightning Lass, Magnetic Kid, Sensor Girl. Yeuch!

But this lot may prove to be useful background because one of the other packages I've got is the first episode of a four part adventure featuring characters from the Legion. **Pawns of Time** is one of those annoying adventures which relies upon a central deception, thus forcing the reviewer to say nothing whatever abot the plot lest he give the game away. Mind you, any player worth his salt should be able to work out most of what's going on from the title.

Events are pretty linear, and the adventure also relies on the heroes losing the first two major encounters. It achieves this thanks to DC Heroes' wonderful 'bashing combat' rules. In essence these mean that you fight until one side is all dead. The winners then go away and the losers wake up three hours later with stinking headaches, just like in the comics. As the only significant changes in the final encounter are that the players have surprise on their side and the bad guys have lots of new allies and I am a little dubious about the balance of this adventure.

Pawns of Time is not a bad adventure, but neither is it a particularly good one. The main thing it has going for it is that the players never get to find out who was really behind what was happening and will therefore be keen to play the next part. Even so, I think I'd wait for all four parts to appear before buying.

An Element of Danger seemed initially to be more promising. Although it features one of DC's daftest looking characters, Firestorm, the man with a small nuclear fireball instead of hair, it is written by Steve Perrin, ex of Chaosium and co-designer of *RuneQuest*. Sadly, it is rather dull. I have a suspicion that Steve hacked this one out in a couple of days. It is uniteresting, unexciting and has a *deus ex machina* ending which makes the whole thing a waste of time. Not recommended.

Which brings me to **Don't Ask**. But of course, you will, because few of you will have any idea who Ambush Bug is. Well, don't say you weren't warned.

Irwin Scwab was abandoned by his parents at an early age and raised by a TV set. He got his powers when a spacefaring alien wardrobe mistook the aerial of his foster mother for a clothes hanger... He has no secret identity as he never removes his costume - he can't, the zip's stuck.

You don't have to play Ambush Bug himself. He just helps the players against the bad guy, thus making their task a million times more difficult.

The adventure is in the same zany vein as the Ambush Bug comic, and I'd very much like to recommend it because I found it hilarious. However, you need to be a comic fan (and a DC afficionado in particular) in order to understand many of the jokes. That gives the adventure a much more limited audience. The only major element of more interest to roleplayers is the running joke about how bad the DC Heroes gadgetry rules are. A wonderful adventure - shame it will appeal to so few people.

Pete Tamlyn

AWESOME

L · I · E · S

Work in Progress

Life in Nottingham goes on as normal; crowds of innocent shoppers never suspect that behind the facade of a building on Low Pavement, *things* are happening...

Realm of Chaos is now being edited, and is scheduled for release in October. It's come a long way since it was first talked about in 1983. Originally the fourth volume of the *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* rules, it is now planned as a hardback supplement for both *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* and *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay*, with full coverage of five Chaos Gods, Chaos Warriors and Sorcerers, sample Chaos armies and warbands, a Chaos Bestiary, and a much-expanded version of the Chaos Mutation Table which appeared in the first Citadel Compendium, boasting almost 130 Chaos mutations. That's a lot of Chaos. It is also hoped to include some sample battles and adventures in the book. Our correspondent tried to interview Graeme Davis, who is working on the final editing of the text, but was unable to make his knocking heard above the screams, gibbers, squelches and other, less easily described noises that drifted through the door of the rubber-lined office at GW.

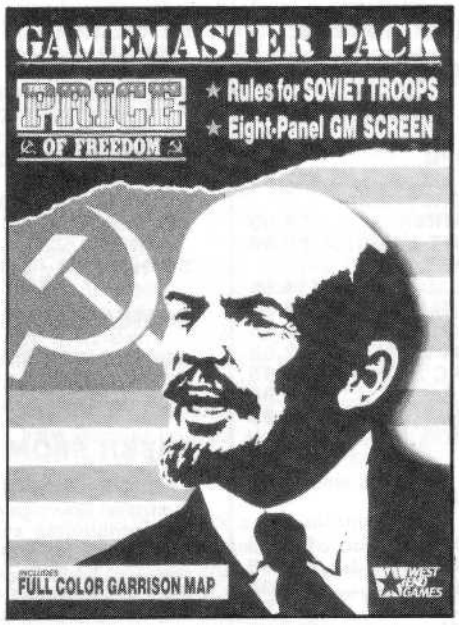
Death on the Reik steams ahead, as do **Rogue Trooper** and **Ravening Hordes** (aka *Warhammer Army Lists*), all mentioned in the last issue.

Block Mania, the second of GW's Judge Dredd boardgames, is being playtested even as I write, and looks good so far. As it should - author Richard Halliwell's previous credits include *Rogue Trooper*, as well as co-writing **Warhammer Fantasy Battle** and **Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay**.

Sumfink's Goin' On...

Two 'finks' this time round, so pay attention. There will be a short test later on.

First, an attempt on the **World AD&D Continuous Play Record** will be made, starting at high noon on Monday April 13th. The record currently stands at 84 hours, and a group of avid gamers from Cornwall will be trying for three figures. 100 hours may not sound like much, but it works out at just over 4 days non-stop - wears your percentiles out just thinking about it, doesn't it? Proceeds go to Childline, so give it your support. Contact address is 119 Rosmellin, Higher Roskear, Camborne, Cornwall. If you want to have a go at this sort of thing you should contact *Sally Meadows, TSR UK Limited, The Mill, Rathmore Road, Cambridge CB1 4AD* for the marathon rules, conditions and other Guinnessy bits.



Second, Beccon 87 takes place on April 17th-20th at the Metropole Hotel, Birmingham. As well as everything you would expect from the British Science Fiction Easter Convention, there will be a games room organised by one Marcus Rowland, who just happens to be a *White Dwarf* stalwart. Registration costs £12, made payable to BECCON at 191 The Heights, Northolt, Middx UB5 4BU. Registration has been open since Easter last year, so there may not be too many tickets left.

From Across the Water

Plenty of forthcoming attractions announced from the Thirteen Colonies. The dates given are for the US - UK dates are bound to be different.

West End Games have announced the *Price of Freedom GM's Pack* along with *Your Own Private Idaho*, an adventure pack including helicopter and anti-aircraft rules. Also coming are *Fire Team*, a modern-day tactical wargame, *Western Front Tank Leader*, and *Scared Stiffs*, a *Ghostbusters* adventure set in the charming and picturesque town of Wrath, New England.

Chaosium are talking about a May release of the first of the *Cthulhu Kits* (no prizes for guessing the game involved). The *Miskatonic Matriculation Kit* includes a Student Handbook, Class Schedule, student ID card, library card and other memorabilia from Lovecraft's fictional seat of learning. To follow, we are told, will be the *Investigator's Kit*, including a Scratch'n'sniff Monster Identification Card. Skritt, skritt, hmmm, yeuchh.

Also from Chaosium will be *Terror Australis* for CoC, which sounds a bit like *Green and Pleasant Land* with corks on its hat (March), *Shattered Isle* and *White Wolf* for the *Eternal Champion* games (February and June respectively), and *Tournament of Dreams* for *Pendragon* (May).

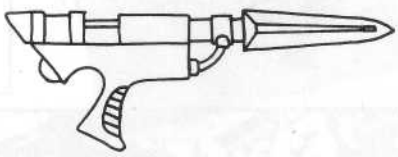
The **TSR** '87 catalogue has a few interesting bits and pieces: the trend for compilations of old modules looks set to continue throughout the year with *B1-9, S1-4* and *I3-5* all making reappearances in the softback book format of *GDQ1-7*. There's a lot of new stuff, too - the *D&D Gazetteer* series details the lands of the D&D world, starting with *The Grand Duchy of Karameikos*, and *Forgotten Realms*, a new world-series a la *Dragonlance* is announced for AD&D (starting in June), while the Blackmoor D&D series marches on with *DA3 City of the Gods* (March) and *DA4 The Duchy of Ten* (June). *The Book of Lairs II* (April) will no doubt be exactly what it sounds like, as will *I13 Adventure Pack I* (May). Two more (!) AD&D Hardbacks are also on the cards: the *Manual of the Planes* and *Dragonlance Adventures*. There's plenty more to come - watch this space.

Zap-Pow Zoweeee

Marvel Super Heroes gets *MA3 The Ultimate Powers Book* with 300 superpowers (not including *Wear Leotard* skill, we hear), and *MX1-4*, a series of linked adventures (starting April). **Mayfair Games** have a lot of upcoming releases for *DC Heroes - Night in Gotham, Legion of Super-Heroes Vol 2* (sourcebooks), *HIVE, Rigged Relsults* (Teen Titans Adventures), *Knight to Planet 3* (Legion of Super-Heroes), and *Who Watches the Watchmen?*. Something grittily superheroic (a la Watchmen) is in the early stages of writing for WD...

Fancy a Quick Flash?

Lazer Tag is a new concept for TSR - a live-action game using lightguns. Handbook and Tournament Book due in the Spring, also linked gamebooks (how??). My moles at the Earl's Court Toy Fair tell me that it involves lots of running about and trying to make your opponent's harness light up, and word is that the toy lasers are only slightly less expensive than real ones.



CRITICAL MASS

A regular book review column, written by Dave Langford

Your editor wrote to cheer me with the news that this month I'd be notching up my fiftieth *Critical Mass*. I knew there had to be some explanation for my snow-white hair, Grand Canyon-like wrinkles and other evidences of premature senility. 'We're giving you a special celebration treat,' Mr Brunton went on, and I braced myself to accept with due modesty the gift of a diamond-studded word processor or crate of champagne... 'For your 50th column we're going to let you write twice as much!'

Colin Wilson, my favourite dotty philosopher, has likewise decided to spread himself at length, after 30-odd years of writing. **Spider World: The Tower** (Grafton 398pp £10.95) opens a fat, far-future SF trilogy in which humankind has been reduced to slavery/outlawry by giant balloon-borne 'death spiders', apparently mutated by radiation from a passing comet. Any SF fan can instantly imagine a scenario in which the young hero develops arcane mental powers; finds himself the only person capable of killing the arachnid oppressors; is instructed in his true heritage by an aeons-old computer; and wins free thanks to a convenient buried arsenal of doomsday weapons. Rather surprisingly, Wilson's plot is exactly this one...

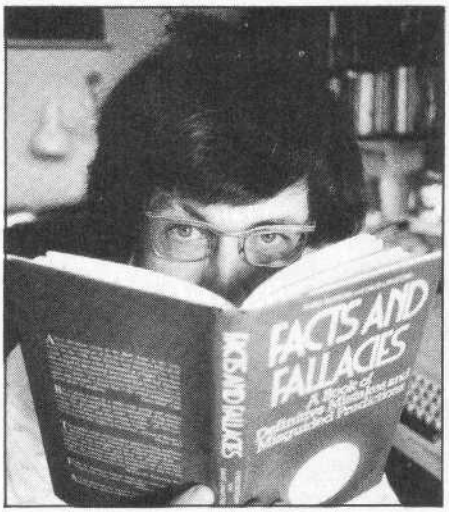
Tower opens with much ostentatious research work about deserts and creepy-crawlies, which in the great tradition of pulp SF ignores the sheer unworkability of giant insects. (As explained in JBS Haldane's *Possible Worlds* — dated 1927). The best bits are flashes of insight into how spiders might think: here the musty but ripping yarn comes alive, only to trip over such wild generalizations as 'The spider is the only living creature that spends its life lying in wait, hoping that victims will walk into its trap.' Would it be pedantic to observe that sea anemones and ant lions do just the same — and that an ant lion was shown in full action only 8 pages previously? Readable, but irritating.

(The jacket, by Chris Foss, looks oddly as though a hasty spiderweb plus token balloons have been added to an existing painting of derelict city remarkably unlike Wilson's. Surely not...?)

I once irritated serious-minded critics by publishing a novel that cracked jokes about nukes. James Morrow's **This Is The Way The World Ends** (Gollancz 319pp £10.85) goes further, a great deal further, into sort of manic *Slaughterhouse 5* treatment of nuclear apocalypse. Its gestures are so completely over the top as to defy criticism. The horrically described aftermath of a megaton strike fills a chapter whose bland title is: 'In Which the Limitations of Civil Defence Are Explicated in a Manner Some Readers May Find Distressing'. With history and rationality blown to atoms, the book moves on into fantasy as six survivors are seized to stand trial after the fashion of the Nuremberg hearings, for crimes against the future. The author and his characters wisecrack their way through post-apocalyptic horror, in a way which you can take either as deeply bad taste or as an indication that minds incapable of grasping the enormity of nuclear was beforehand would do no better afterwards.

This is a harrowingly satirical book, whose main flaw lies in its treatment of the USSR. World War III, it turns out, started by accident: but only Americans are prosecuted by the unborn, the evil Russkies being prejudged as insane and unworthy of trial. This strikes me as an insecure foundation for a scathing attack on the arms race.

Michael Scott Rohan's above-average 'Winter of the World' trilogy is unusual for avoiding the Black Lord/Evil Empire syndrome... his cold war is against the encroaching Ice which threatens the remnant of civilization. Book 2, **The Forge in the Forest** (Macdonald 408pp £10.95), has the traditional middle-volume plot of an immense journey through nameless perils — parts of which I found myself skipping, only to enjoy the vivid highlights of battle, smithcraft (in one Wagneresque scene the hero uses lightning to reforge an indestructible sword which proves to be reinforced with carbon fibre: it's a smidgeon less convincing when he invents electroplating and gets everything right first time), and above all the Power and geography of the inhospitable Ice. Book 1, *The Anvil of Ice,* is now a paperback.



Ian Watson is a deeply untraditional author; **Evil Water** (Gollancz 200pp £10.95) is his fourth collection, comprising 10 stories of SF, fantasy, horror and pure Watsonism. This collection is a shade less substantial than previous ones, but still offers fun and intellectual fireworks: alien parasites, failed timegates, transatlantic sponsored swimming, Greenham Common allegory, and an enjoyably nasty sense of humour throughout.

But Watson's is an austere and reasoned nastiness, without the lush sensual decadence of the month's most reprehensible reissue: J.K.Huysmans' 1891 classic **La Bas** (Dedalus 287pp £4.50), also known in this country as *Down There* or *Lower Depths*. The hero or anti-hero Durtal is a thinly disguised Huysmans, indulging himself in exotic food and drink such as 'that alkermes which makes the person tasting it think he is in an Oriental pharmaceutic labor-atory.' He's trying to achieve the same titillation for his mind by immersing himself in first historical and then contemporary 19th-century devil-worship — which, as Robert Irwin rightly notes in his introduction, 'should not be confused with the later sanitized adventure fantasies of Dennis Wheatley... Huysmans has given us real spit-and-sawdust Satanism.' A lurid and influential book, containing that famous description of the Black Mass attended by Huysmans himself.

The Lives and Times of Jerry Cornelius (Grafton 185pp £2.50) is a more recent reprint, from 1976: oblique, fragmented stories of the hero/assassin who became a rallying point for the 1960s 'New Wave' themes of entropy and disintegration. A blurb: 'The conflicting time streams of the 20th century were mirrored in Jerry Cornelius.' An extract: 'Jerry hated needling a dead man, but it was necessary. He looked down at the twice-killed corpse of Borman, the first Nazi astronaut.' An epilogue lists Moorcock's favourite hates: Kingsley Amis, CS Lewis, JRR Tolkien, Charles Williams, Gilbert and Sullivan, all having 'subtly corroded the quality of English thinking.' A motto for the Cornelius tales: 'never apologise, never explain.' A review? The above is all you get.

The Best SF of Isaac Asimov (Frafton 320pp £10.95... publishers seem to have unanimously decided that £10.95 is now the basic hardback price) runs to 28 stories, excluding 'mysteries', which are saved for a companion volume. Most of these have been recycled many times before: 'it's my busy and efficient publishers who more or less insist on it,' notes Asimov. Some OK stuff here, but little that's unfamiliar.

And: **The Years of the City** by Frederick Pohl (NEL 375pp £2.95), in which new York appears in five snapshots of an increasingly optimistic future; **Orphans of the Sky** by Robert Heinlein (Grafton 143p £2.50), the pioneering 'generation ship whose crew has forgotten its origin' story; **The Ice King** by Michael Scott (NEL 252pp £2.50), exciting supernatural thriler of archaeology, computers, Nordic vampires, and Fimbulwinter — but what a yucky cover; and **The Peace Machine** by Bob Shaw (Grafton 187p £2.50), whose well-drawn hero tries like CS Forester's *The Peacemaker* to use his marvellous gadget to end war... with similar success.

Finally, an unsolicited plug for a book I've been enjoying in my spare time while preparing this lot: **Metamagical Themas** by Douglas Hofstadter (Penguin 852pp £9.95), a heady mixture of computers, art, mathematics, philosophy, jokes and above all games. If you want something a little bit *different* from role-playing, try the self-referential game of Nomic described here... in which the rules can be changed by vote, and indeed every move consists of an attempt to change the rules.

By unanimous vote of your editor, we're now going to hurl the rulebook out of the window and do a special *Critical Mass* suppliement. To boldly go where no review has gone before...

A Critical Alphabet

A is for Anthologies, an endangered species except when A also stands for Asimov (who lends his name to endless collections assembled by others). The 'public' dislikes shorts: new novelists have a slim chance, but collections from non-established authors send editors into screaming retreat.

B is for Bathos, the stylistic pratfall which awaits incautious writers of high fantasy. Perhaps it's unfair to quote William Morris's 1897 *The Water of the Wondrous Isles*, whose heroine repossesses a frock swiped by a witch: 'Nay, ye have been in ill company, I will wear you not, though ye be goodly, at least not till ye have been fumigated...'

C stands for Critic, and bygone actor WC Macready summed it up: 'I wish I were anything rather than an actor — *except a critic*; let me be unhappy rather than vile!' A sentiment recently echoed by Piers Anthony and Robert Heinlein.

D is for critical Doubts. Have I been too nice or nasty in reviews? Should I have been ruder to Gwyneth Jones's talented but reader-resistant *Escape Plans?* (See under **E.**) Was I over-kind to Greg Bear's *Eon* thanks to its bold use of infinities (see under **M**)? **D** is also Decisions, Decisions...

E for Endurance carries its own pitfall. Friends are aghast at my ability to plough through semi-infinite blockbusters, but EM Forster adds a warning... 'One always tends to overpraise a long book because one has got through it.'

F is for Footnotes, which owing to typesetting economies aren't Fashionable. Jack Vance uses footnotes to nifty effect when setting up exotic backgrounds; but SF's most bizarre text note comes in the Aldiss *Trillion Year Spree*, where to establish feminist credentials, collaborator David Wingrove spends 240-odd words boasting about the non-sexism of his common-law marriage. Very scientifictional.

G indicates the Gerunds which since *The Shining* have become infallible signs of bad horror titles: *The Spawning, The Groping, The Yucking*. To hand is Tim Stout's *The Raging* (Grafton 256pp £2.50), whose blurb — 'It makes a man's blood boil — to slaughter-point' — would also do nicely for *The Reviewing*.

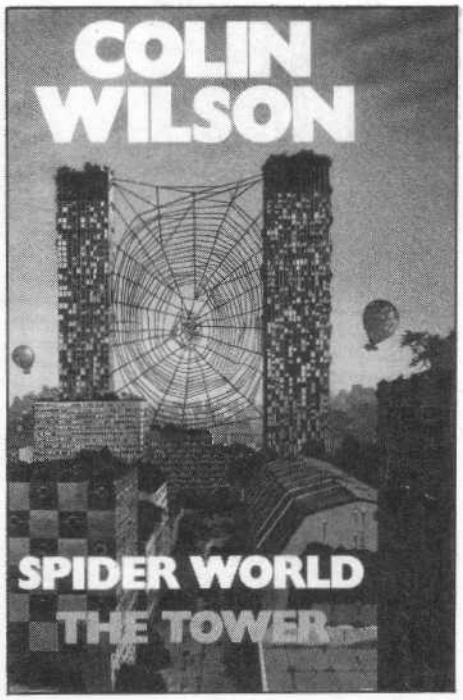
H is Hugo Award. Be wary of this as a stamp of quality: it's voted by a minority of each year's World SF Convention members, and is thus (a) American-dominated; (b) heavily swayed by authors' personalities and fan involvement. However, my own Hugo was for sheer merit, cross my heart.

I is trendy Information Technology, overrunning SF as writers imitate William Gibson's remarkable *Neuro-mancer* and *Count Zero*. Back in near-reality, Prestel's 'Earthlight' SF database is giving room to Dwarfish material (key *810941)... while hi-tech *Dwarf* itself encourages submissions on disk! *Critical Mass* retains its typesetting errors because *WD* can't afford compatibility with any word processor costing more than...

J for Juvenile is a marketing category also given the less patronizing name 'young adult'. SF which was one 'adult' can turn up with this label: a Good Thing if you're not too snobbish to read 'juveniles', because for unexplained reasons these editions are always cheaper.

K must be that strange genius Kafka, and the over-use of 'Kafkaesque' to describe any SF featuring surrealism, bureaucracy, helplessness or hangovers. Critic James Agate once devised a badge with the letters PPKIBC: 'Perpetual President Kafka Is Balls Club.'

L is *Little, Big* by John Crowley, a quietly convoluted book which turns in on itself, a tale about a Tale: my most re-read fantasy since *CM* began. Few readers survived Methuen's paperback, which foolishly reduced the small print of the Gollancz edition to a microfiche-sized optician's delight.



M is Mathematics. I'm a sucker for mathematically-based SF: you don't see much, becuase it's hard to do. Try *White Light* by Rudy Rucker, an ex-hippy who gets high on infinite set theory to create the hugest 'world' in SF. (Huger than Chris Priest's infinite *Inverted World*, since Priest uses lower orders of infinity!).

N is obviously Novel, the unobvious point being that many aren't. Beware (a) the short story inflated by huge print, wide margins, terrible illustrations and blank pages; (b) collections billed as novels to make them sell; (c) seeming novels which stop in mid-plot with the words 'Continued in Volumes II-XXIV of *Quest of the Runefork*, now in preparation...'

O for Originality is a devilish hard thing to judge. Once I was impressed by cybernetic speculations in Frank Herbert's *Destination Void* (another 'Yes, now there is a God!' book) — until I found they'd been copied verbatim from an essay by Mr Cybernetics himself, Norbert Wiener's *God & Golem Inc...*

P is a book's Publicity, usually confined to an inaccurate blurb: 'The megashock novel of flesh-rending microchip horror!' is a favourite — from Theodore Roszak's *Bugs*, wherein bugs emerge from computer programs and bite people.

Q is Quotation, to which I'm addicted (see above, see below, see 49 previous columns). The 1980 *Penguin Dictionary of Modern Quotations* features several live SF authors, most unexpectedly Larry Niven relating the best advice he ever had. 'On my 21st birthday my father said, "Son, here's a million dollars. Don't lose it."'.

R must be Robotics, with a respectful nod to Asimov for inventing the word... and a loud Raspberry for adding (after 40-odd years) a lopsided sequel to that self-contained trilogy the Three Laws of Robotics.

S is Suppression: can I send you scurrying lewdly to bookshops by listing once-forbidden SF/fantasy? Cabell's fine *Jurgen* was banned in 1920 for its decorous naughtiness; Huxley's 'immoral' *Brave New World* got the chop from the Irish government in 1932; Spinrad's *Bug Jack Barron* serialization so shocked WH Smith in 1968 that they vetoed *New Worlds* magazine; and *WD86* suppressed Graham Masterton's nauseating line 'The eel had swallowed his (*You stop right there! Ed.*).

T for Translation produces more unlikely statistics. In UNESCO's top twenty translated authors for 1980, Asimov is the only living SF writer (82 translations, just behind Dostoevsky and Twain). Jules Verne outdoes him with 172 translations (just ahead of Enid Blyton and Karl Marx).

U is for Unnameable, Unspeakable and the University of Chicago — which as a treat for Cthulhu fans offers 'a translation of Greek magical papyri (300BC-690AD) wherein you may make the acquaintance of the Demiurge of the Seven Laughs and the Headless Demon Who Sees With His Feet. Besides infallible methods of nobbling the chariot races and making your shadow invisible,' writes investigator RI Barycz.

V is for the disappointment I've christened the Vampire Effect. It works like this: a mainstream author achieves a shock ending by introducing a vampire (or something similar) into a 'straight' story. Then an anthologist reprints it and wonders why it lacks the same impact in a collection called *Fifty Great Tales In Which The Heroine Turns Out To Be A Vampire*.

W, the Wild Hunt, is about the most overused prop in fantasy. Can doomed Herne and his spectral hounds please be given a rest for a few decades? 'From a find to a check, from a check to a view, from a view to a cliché in the morning...'

X of course stands for Xanthopsia, being the jaundiced view this column takes of trilogies which contain enough interesting ideas for one and a half books, but continue remorselessly for nine.

Y ou still make the final decision, folks. Some people appear to think that my slightest hostile comment will condemn whole printings to the pulping vats... The despised reviewer can only read the book and try to indicate whether it seems to 'work', with allowances for personal prejudice. Eg I generally dislike horror novels for their tedious repetition of a limited vocabulary of nastiness — which doesn't stop me admiring a high-class one by Ramsey Campbell.

Z for Zelazny gives a postscript on fallibility. Several SF critics praised Zelazny's description of an alien tree as wittily evocative: 'a frozen foundation of orange marmalade.' They missed the joke: the original computer Adventure, *Colossal Cave*, has a cavern whose 'walls are frozen fountains of orange marble.' Zelazny stands revealed as a crypto-hacker...

THE HOBBIT'S ARMPIT - AS USUAL THRUD IS SHOWING DEEP CONCERN OVER HIS OUTSTANDING BILL...
GIMME A DRINK!
SURE COACH - WHAT'S UP ANYWAY?
TOMMORROW'S THE BIG MATCH AGAINST THE ARMAGEDDON AVENGERS AND I'VE GOT A BIG PROBLEM...
OUR STAR PLAYER 'MAD' DAN WIDOWMAKER WAS BADLY INJURED IN TRAINING THIS MORNING WITHOUT HIM WE'VE NO CHANCE AGAINST THE AVENGERS...
MORE BEER-NOW!
...UNLESS...
THRUD THE BARBARIAN
© CARL CRITCHLOW '87
"GOOD AFTERNOON SPORTS FANS, AND WELCOME TO THE THUNDERDOME WHERE THE ARMAGEDDON AVENGERS SEEM SET TO TAKE THIS YEARS BLOODBOWL TROPHY..."
"AND THEY'RE OFF!"
ARMAGEDDON AVENGERS
72
DEATHSHEAD DESTROYERS
72
"WELL JUST TWO MINUTES TO GO AND ALL SQUARE - IN A SURPRISE MOVE THE DESTROYERS HAVE BROUGHT ON A SUBSTITUTE - WHO HAS NEVER PLAYED BEFORE! HA! HE'LL BE RIPPED TO PIECES FOR SURE!"
"WELL MAYBE NOT!"
OUR HERO SOON ENTERS INTO THE SPIRIT OF THINGS
OH! - THOUGHT IT FELT A BIT SQUASHY FOR A FOOTBALL!
HA! TOUCHDOWN!
BUT I'VE GOT THE BALL!

THE PADDINGTON HORROR

Following last month's article, *With A Pinch of Salt*, Marcus Rowland presents an adventure for *Call of Cthulhu*

This adventure is designed as a slot-in episode for any 1920s *CoC* campaign in which an investigator has been captured by Cultists, and not immediately rescued. All material here is for the eyes of the keeper only. A London setting is assumed throughout, and you will find the material presented in the new *Green & Pleasant Land* package especially useful in running this adventure. If your campaign has a different setting, however, you should find that minor details can be changed quite easily.

Once one of your players has been captured by the Cultists, for whatever reason, the following newspaper story appears the very next morning:

SINGULAR REVELATIONS AT CORONER'S COURT

The inquest into the death of Michael MacNamara was adjourned today for further medical reports. Mr. MacNamara, a builder's labourer, was found dead beside the lines of the Great Western Railway, near Paddington Station, on Monday evening. He had been missing from his Kilburn home for a week.

At first it was thought that the deceased had fallen from a train and died of his wounds, but Doctor Bernard Spilsbury, the Police Pathologist, gave evidence that no blood had been found. He went on to say, 'When I examined the body I found strong indications that MacNamara had been dead for some time; I would estimate at least three days. The body seems to have been bound before and during death.' At this point the wife of the deceased collapsed and was taken from the court.

Dr. Spilsbury added 'There were cuts at the wrists and ankles, and I believe that the cause of death was loss of blood. Marks on the body are consistent with damage some time after death. I would guess that the body had been dropped from the foot-bridge overhead. However, I would prefer to make further tests before committing myself fully. Some markings appear to have been drawn on the body before death and on these I would prefer not to comment further at this time.'

The Coroner adjourned the inquest pending further medical and police investigations. It is believed that the police are treating the case as Murder.

KEEPER'S INFORMATION

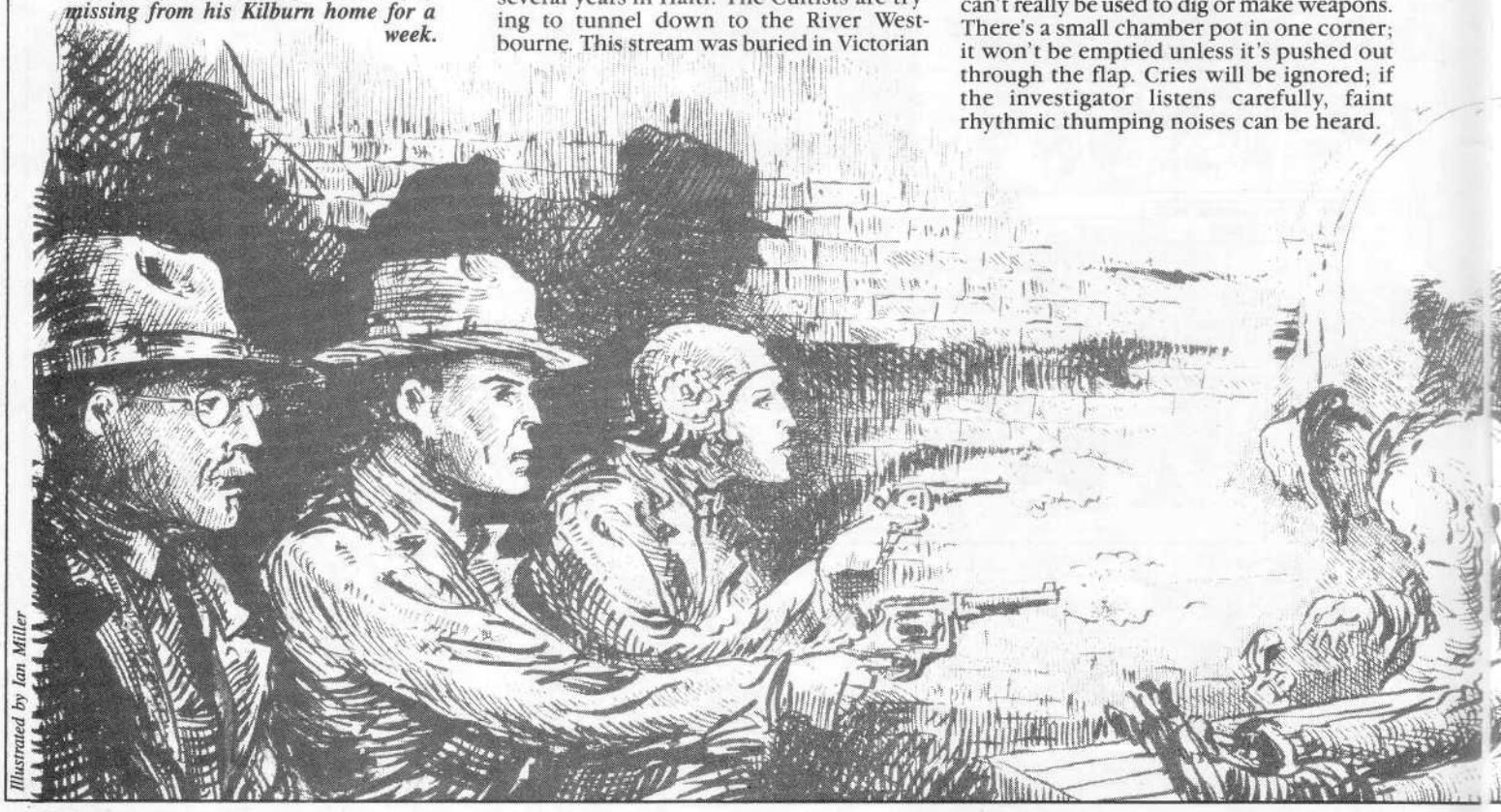
This episode should only be used when one of the investigators is completely at the mercy of Cultists. Any temptation to capture an investigator especially for this adventure, though, should be resisted, since there is a fair chance that the victim will die. For the purposes of this adventure it's stated that the Cultists involved worship Hastur; in your own campaign some other deity may need to be substituted.

A group of London-based Cultists are led by Colonel Dennis Bryant-Hoskins, a former member of the Royal Engineers who spent several years in Haiti. The Cultists are trying to tunnel down to the River Westbourne. This stream was buried in Victorian times, since it periodically flooded and was little more than an open sewer, but the Cultists believe that it gives access to many curious locations under the city. Unfortunately both ends are now inaccessible; one end is a buried underground spring, the other is in Hyde Park, where a trickle flows into the Serpentine Lake. The tunnel mouth is very low and securely barred and locked, and use would attract too much attention.

Bryant-Hoskins knows the secret of zombification, and the Cultists are using reanimated corpses to dig down from the cellar of a house near the railway. Unfortunately three of the zombies were crushed when part of the tunnel collapsed, and the Cultists are currently trying to create replacements, using the technique described in *With A Pinch Of Salt (WD87)* under 'Traditional Zombies'.

Bryant-Hoskins is aided by his chauffeur, Oscar Nadler, and his valet, Hugo Jervis, who are both committed Cultists. Their first victim was Michael MacNamara. Unfortunately they miscalculated his strength, and he bled to death before they were ready for the transition from life to 'undeath'. Now members of an allied Cult (whichever one is used in your campaign) have provided another victim - the investigator who was captured. Bryant-Hoskins will be ready to try the spells again in a few days.

At this stage the captured investigator should be secretly told that he or she has been knocked out, and wakes up in a brick cell, stripped naked but provided with a mattress and a few blankets. The cell door is impressively thick metal, and doesn't show any signs of giving way when pushed. A dim light comes through a ceiling grille, and a failing electric bulb is just visible above it. Bowls of gruel and slices of bread are pushed under a door flap three times a day; there is no cutlery, and the utensils are made of papier mache, which can't really be used to dig or make weapons. There's a small chamber pot in one corner; it won't be emptied unless it's pushed out through the flap. Cries will be ignored; if the investigator listens carefully, faint rhythmic thumping noises can be heard.



Illustrated by Ian Miller

The other investigators should be told that they see the story printed earlier in the newspaper the morning after their colleague disappears. You should not imply that it's a clue to the fate of their colleague, and while you are at liberty to add other stories which tie in to your campaign, you should try to ensure that there's no other story that could be misinterpreted as a lead in this case. Details vary slightly in different papers, but *The Times* naturally gives the most complete account.

If they decide to investigate, you need take no further action, otherwise characters with appropriate backgrounds (eg, anthropologists, psychic researchers, explorers, etc) will be contacted by the police or Doctor Spilsbury, who will want their views on the odd markings found on the body. Anyone making a Cthulhu Mythos roll and who has some knowledge of Hastur will recognise one of the symbols as relating to the deity, marked on the skin in red cochineal dye, though it is blurred and incomplete. Investigators who make an Occult roll recognise some of the secondary markings as being associated with African ceremonial magic, but are't able to identify them further since they are a very obscure form. If they can persuade Spilsbury to talk about the case he says that the victim was apparently hung up by his arms and bled to death. He also says that the police are looking for a man who was seen with MacNamara the night he disappeared; he doesn't have any other details.

Through police and press contacts the investigators should (hopefully) be able to learn that both men left a Kilburn pub together the night MacNamara disappeared; the stranger was dark, bearded, and about six feet tall.

As the investigators probe further into the case they'll realise that they aren't the only people on the trail. The murderers are being hunted by the police, who may occasionally prove a nuisance, and for some reason most of the people they talk to in Kilburn will prove to be strangely silent. For example, MacNamara's wife will refuse to talk to the team if they aren't accompanied by the police, and the owner of the pub where he was last seen will be surly and unco-operative.

Eventually a group of men, their faces masked by scarves and caps, corner a member of the team and start questioning him or her. It should become almost immediately apparent that MacNamara belonged to one or other of the factions currently active in Ireland. On the night he disappeared he was on his way to a meeting, carrying 'a lot of money' (actually £24 2s 3d) contributed by supporters in Kilburn. Further details of his activities won't be revealed to the investigator, no matter what.

MacNamara's associates want to know everything the team have learned. If the investigator cooperates, one of the Irishmen will say that MacNamara left with three men, not one, and was seen entering a blue Morris van, licence *UZ 213*, which left before anyone could stop them. Both the other men were thick-set, one of them was bald; all three were strangers. They can't reveal any other useful information, and are too busy evading the police to take much of a hand in the rest of this investigation. They may eventually show some form of gratitude (such as providing useful information in a future case) if the investigators find MacNamara's murderers. Any investigator foolish enough to put up a fight should be badly beaten, bruised but not seriously injured; the Irishmen don't want to stir up trouble that might interfere with their fund-raising activities in Britain. Naturally the team won't be fully trusted by this group under any circumstances, and should never be told the exact nature of their cause, learn names, or see their full faces. If the team check they'll learn that *UZ 213* appears to be a false number. The police don't know about the van or the other two men.

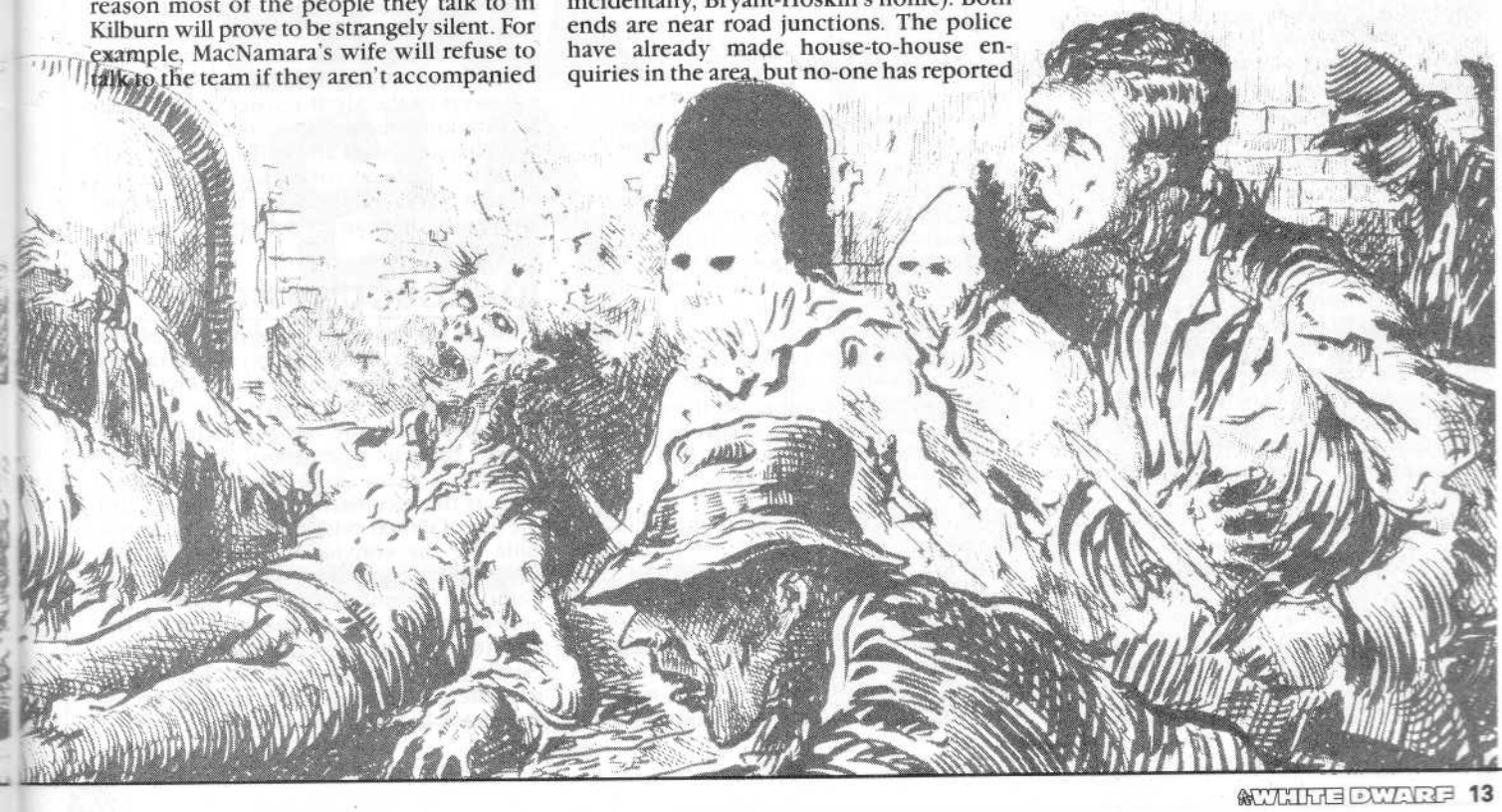
Investigations in the area where the body was found won't reveal much. The footbridge isn't brightly lit, and is within easy reach of several hundred houses (including, incidentally, Bryant-Hoskin's home). Both ends are near road junctions. The police have already made house-to-house enquiries in the area, but no-one has reported seeing or hearing anything strange. This isn't surprising; the railway line at this point passes through a huge shunting yard, and there is always noise from trains, cattle wagons, shunting engines and workmen. The surrounding houses are coated in soot and grime, and the streets are often filled with a choking mist of steam and smoke as an engine passes.

While the investigators are looking around they'll be aproached by an eight year old neighbourhood boy, who'll start asking questions about their car; engine size, maximum speed, horsepower, and so on. Car spotting is a common hobby in the 1920s, and many children write down the licence numbers and models of any car they see, along with the date and location. Suitable bribes of a penny or two, a few sweets or cigarette cards, should result in the children letting adults see their logbooks. Eventually they'll find two or three who have recorded seeing the van in streets around the Portobello Road, a mile or so to the west. Of course, adults may object to strangers giving their children money or sweets, and a number of incidents may develop, at your discretion.

Questioning more children near Portobello Road will eventually lead the investigators to a lock-up garage, large enough for two cars, which holds the van.

The garage is securely locked, and neighbours will call the police if the investigators are seen breaking in. It's rented from a local estate agent, but the name used to rent it was false. He can describe the man who rented the garage; it was Jervis, though that name wasn't used. If the investigators break in they'll find the van, plus a few odds and ends of junk, including several sacks and ropes. There are no clues to true identity of the owner.

If the investigators keep watch at the garage they eventually see a black Bentley, licence plate *BG 144*, arrive an hour after night falls.



The driver (Nadler) waits while a passenger (Jervis) gets out, enters the garage, and returns a minute or two later. As the Bentley leaves, the investigators smell smoke; the visitor has spilled petrol around the garage, and set fire to the van to destroy any clues. Unless the investigators are careful they may be blamed for the fire; after all, they've been waiting outside the garage for several hours.

The Bentley can be followed back to the house, but takes evasive action if the investigators are too obvious. Alternatively, its licence number can be traced by anyone with police contacts, though this takes several hours.

Bryant-Hoskins' home is a three-storey Victorian house, standing in modest grounds surrounded by high holly hedges, a hundred yards back from the railway. There are occasional signs of other people in the house; for example, a curtain might move or a light might be switched on or off. The Bentley is parked on the drive and two more cars are parked in the street, which is very unusual in this era. While the investigators are studying the house two more cars arrive, and the occupants are admitted to the house. Naturally Jervis knows the Cultists by sight, and won't admit anyone he doesn't recognise. Nadler backs him up if there's trouble.

During this section of the adventure the player running the prisoner should be separated from the others, if they haven't been already. Say nothing (to any player) to confirm that the victim is in Bryant-Hoskins' home.

Around this time the captive investigator should be told that he or she has felt ill since the last meal. Two men wearing hoods enter the cell, and order the prisoner to accompany them upstairs. The victim has been fed a drug to suppress POW, as described above. If the drug worked no resistance is possible; if it failed the victim has lost some POW, and must roll against 5 x modified POW to resist orders. Both Cultists have coshes and ropes, and should be able to overcome a weakened victim. As the victim leaves the cell a shaft in the floor can be seen, but the victim is led up through an apparently normal house to the attic, where he or she is spread-eagled and tied to a wooden frame. Try to avoid saying anything that confirms that the victim is in Bryant-Hoskins' house.

Bryant-Hoskins' house isn't an unusual design, and any medium-sized building plan can be used. The main points of interest are the excavations in the cellar (a shaft thirty feet deep, and a tunnel leading off towards the river), the cell, a copy of *The Golden Bough* (the usual edition) and some old papers securely locked in the Colonel's safe, and a sound-proofed attic temple devoted to Hastur. The papers in the safe describe the zombification process; they are a unique source, written in a mixture of English and French, and give 8% Mythos knowledge, 15% Occult knowledge, a x2 spell multiplier (for the zombification ritual only), and the loss of 1d8 SAN. There's a gun rack in the Colonel's study, with enough rifles and shotguns for all the Cultists, and they'll definitely use them if there is warning of an attack. One of the bedrooms has been converted to a small pharmacology laboratory; it contains all the ingredients needed to create the POW-suppressant chemical used in the first stage of zombification.

If the investigators break in they hear a faint noise of voices from above, and muffled thudding noises from the cellar. If the investigators go down they discover the zombies, but are delayed long enough for their colleague to be killed. If they go up first they must fight their way past Jervis and Nadler, and one or two other cultists, who stand guard outside the attic. If they can defeat them within five rounds the victim is still alive when they break in (but only on 1d4 hit points), and is bleeding to death.

There are three Cultists for each investigator, plus Bryant-Hoskins and his two servants. There are four zombies, which normally spend their time digging. Two or three of the Cultists are members of high society, and their arrest would be a great scandal; if they are killed there will be an outcry for the arrest of the murderers!

Naturally, neighbours call the police within a minute or two of the first shot being fired; even in the 1920s London's police have cars available, though they do not have radio, and will arrive fairly quickly. Constables who are in the area may also arrive on bicycles or on foot, using whistles to summon reinforcements.

Meanwhile, the prisoner in the attic sees the Cultists begin some sort of ceremony. The victim is daubed with dye in elaborate patterns, and cuts are made at their wrists and ankles. Blood starts to drip out, and the victim should lose 1d6 SAN (1 SAN if a SAN roll is made). As the minutes pass (assuming the other investigators don't come upstairs immediately) the victim feels progressively weaker. When hit points drop below half CON start rolling for unconsciousness. The victim 'wakes up' a little later, and should be told that he or she is feeling much stronger. Since the zombies haven't been seen by this character the truth may not be suspected for some time. This scene should be staged as the investigators finally reach the attic, so that the victim has become a zombie, but still retains consciousness, when the investigators break in. At this stage the team can be reunited, but should not be allowed to compare notes.

As the investigators arrive the victim should be told that he (or she) feels strong enough to try to break free. Oppose the victim's STR to bonds of STR 10, modifying the roll for the increase in strength caused by zombification. Repeated attempts can be made. The fight continues until all the Cultists (or all the investigators) are killed or unconscious. If the zombie (ie, the captured investigator) is injured it takes one point of damage from impaling attacks, half normal damage from other attacks.

Once the fight has ended the zombie-investigator begins to feel unwell, and the investigators should notice that they aren't bleeding from any injury, including the cuts made by the Cultists. There is no pulse or heartbeat, and the investigators should realise that the victim has suffered some form of transformation. 1d6 x INT minutes later the victim's INT is lost, and the zombie will go on a rampage, attacking friend and foe alike until it is destroyed.

Most aftermaths of this adventure are unpleasant. The investigators should have no clue to their original enemies, since Bryant-Hoskin's group was entirely separate; it's unlikely that he will survive to talk. The investigators may also have to answer a lot of questions about their part in a gunfight or ritual murders. The truth isn't likely to be believed, although there might be enough evidence to persuade the authorities to keep the whole ghastly scandal quiet. At worse, the publicity involved may make life very difficult for the investigators, as their names are added to the lists of enemies kept by Cults, and elaborate revenge schemes are set in motion. Depending on your plans for your campaign, it might be a good idea for the investigators to leave the country for a year or two (and maybe allow you to use some adventures set in foreign climes), or even change their names.

CHARACTERS

Colonel Dennis Bryant-Hoskins is a tough former soldier. He left the army after a scandal involving the death of a native servant; no other details are readily available.

STR **13** CON **15** SIZ **17** INT **18** POW **22**
DEX **15** APP **16** EDU **17** SAN **0** Hit Pts **16**
Skills: Chemistry 45, Cthulhu Mythos 64, Dodge 65, Drive Automobile 55, Electrical Repair 35, Linguist 42, Listen 56, Mechanical Repair 45, Occult 75, Pharmacy 55, Read French 55, Speak French 77, Fist/Kick 55, Rapier 72, Revolver 61, Rifle 45, Shotgun 52
Equipment: *Carried* - .45 revolver, sword cane, cosh, 1 dose POW-suppressant poison, jack knife
In house - various rifles and shotguns, Pharmacy equipment, Ritual knives etc
Spells: Contact Hastur, Zombification, Ritual, Withering.

Hugo Jervis and ***Oscar Nadler*** should be generated as tough thugs, with high STR, SIZ, and CON, good combat and stealth skills, but little education. The other Cultists are typical medium to low level followers of the Mythos; they have a little Mythos knowledge, but no spells, and normal characteristics and skills. At least two more should be as strong and tough as Jervis and Nadler. They begin the adventure with knives but can get guns from the study if there is time.

BACKGROUND NOTE

With the exception of Dr Bernard Spilsbury (later Sir Bernard Spilsbury) all characters are fictitious. For many years, from before the First World War to after the Second, Spilsbury was the most distinguished British forensic scientist of the age, and poineered many innovative techniques, such as the reconstruction of corpses and the use of dental evidence. He was responsible for the conviction of many of the murderers of the period; for example Rouse, Crippen, Thompson and Bywaters, etc. Spilsbury was one of the leaders of the twentieth-century revolution in criminology, and his skills should be a formidable challenge for any murderous investigator in Britain.

A NIGHT IN THE DEATH OF SECTOR 255

An Adventure for *The Judge Dredd Roleplaying Game* by Hugh Tynan

This adventure is designed as a direct sequel to *A Day In The Life Of Sector 255 (White Dwarf 83)*. It can be run on its own, but if it is used as a sequel it should follow on directly from *Day in the Life*.

This is another 'patrol adventure'. However, unlike *Day in the Life*, this one does have a main plot. Of course, *Night in the Death* is sprinkled with smaller, less important incidents, but the Judges are, above all else, trying to save the entire sector from the devastating effects of an evil plot!

SECTOR HOUSE 255, BRIEFING ROOM: SHIFT 7 - 22.50 HOURS

++ITEM 31++

PEST CONTROL The Gribligs in this sector have multiplied very rapidly and are now a serious problem.

This has to be stopped now. Report all sightings of Gribligs, no matter how trivial, to Pest Control ***immediately****. Keep tabs on the creatures until the exterminators arrive.*

++ITEM 32++

DISAPPEARANCE OF JUDGE One member of Wally Squad investigating the Umpty Bagging in this sector has disappeared. He and his partner had arranged a false bank heist at Bucknard's Everfull Bank. Judge Graham, the missing Judge, walked into the bank at 13.50 hours and hasn't been seen since. His partner was in the getaway vehicle.

Judge Graham: 195cm, small moustache, black hair, blue eyes. Last seen wearing a yellow suit under a red radorak with blue kneepads and green street creepers. In other words, you can't miss him. Teams have been assigned to follow this up, but all squads will be kept posted.

++ITEM 33++

ADVANCE WARNING A new Umpty Candy company, Crudbary, will be pulling off a publicity stunt which involves dropping millions of free pieces of candy onto sector 255. This event has been timed for midnight.

This Umpty has been rigorously tested and is non-addictive. Crudbary also have full authorisation for this little trick. We're just warning you so you won't be surprised when it starts to rain sweets. Don't eat any.

++ITEM 34++

ESCAPING PERPS Whoever it is who can free perps from cuffs has not been caught yet. Since the start of Shift 3 a further 53 perps have been released from holding posts. The total number of perps now freed is 275.

275! ***IN THREE DAYS!*** *Need I say more?*

++ITEM 35++

PROLIFERATION OF SWEARING Due to the excessive use of expletives in this sector the Chief Judge has authorised us to enforce an experimental law which makes the use of the following words illegal: Bambo, Bimbo, Dok, Drokk, Mugglie, Ratfink, and Stomm.

This means you too, boys and girls - Judges have to set a good example! And as S-P-U-G and C-R-E-M-O-L-A are already illegal, that leaves only 'By Grud!'. The Moral Minority object to that too. This is only an experiment for the next 24 hours. The citizens are being informed. All squads are invited to make reports on the desirability of the new law... after the 24 period is over. Only Sector 255 is affected by this new law - this is where swearing is most common, so we get to be the guinea pigs for the rest of MC-1, D-R-O-K-K it!

++ITEM 36++

MISSING MEDAL Sector 255's top runner, Steve Swot, returned from Texas City today. As he ran through his home streets on a 'lap of honour' he was mugged. His 50,000 credit gold medal was stolen.

These little incidents are what gets a sector a bad name you know...

ILLUSTRATED BY BRETT EWINS

++ITEM 37++
SUICIDAL CITIZENS The 'Lemming Syndrome' has struck several times in this sector over the past few nights and it may strike again tonight.

Not much we can do about this, but be warned. You might be needed in a hurry.

++ITEM 38++
GREETINGS The author wishes to say hello and hopes everyone enjoys this adventure as much as the last one.

Er. Sorry about that, Judges. Someone's been tampering with the briefing computer again... Hmmm.

++ITEM 39++
MORALE BOOST Who takes more perps alive?

*All Judges (in chorus): **We do! Sector two-fifty-five!***
OK, Judges, squad routes to follow...

Judge Jude, the assigning officer, gives the following route to the PCs:

'Perimeter patrol tonight for you: east, south and west edges. Start by heading northeast to get to this corner of the sector, then follow the eastern edge until you hit Canavan's Blight Club. From there, west along the southern limits to the Justice Department Armoury. And then back here. Try to stay in the sector, just for me...'

This makes 255 sound like a fairly rectangular sort of area. It's not. Just thought you'd like to know that.

GM'S INTRODUCTORY DATA

In this adventure the PC Judges must thwart a dastardly plot, which could result in the deaths of most of the Sector's inhabitants! Initially, though, this is just another graveyard shift as the PCs arrest minor criminals and clear up a couple of mysteries. However, there are clues to the main thread of the adventure...

The adventure is divided into six phases, covering specific periods of time. A selection of messages from the Sector house to the Judges is also included. At about the right point in the adventure read the message out to the PCs as it appears on their Lawmaster computer screens. Shout 'Item!', hit the table and make the players jump. Somebody might as well have fun. If necessary, alter the message time to keep the action flowing along - ie no important messages arrive in the middle of a battle!

THE PLOT

Grag Peppard is a futsie. So what? Grag Peppard is also the Production Supervisor at Crudbary. The two facts, and what is about to happen to Sector 255, are not entirely unrelated. Peppard is a very dangerous and very crazy person, but he is highly intelligent and possessed of exceptional self-control. Peppard did spend three months in a kook cube, but his external facade of normality (something that few futsies can manage) resulted in his rapid release. Since then he has been building a secret society which now has 5000 members in 33 sectors. The members are, oddly enough, all futsies as well who want to... well, you know what futsies are like. Peppard recruited them through rehabilitation clubs and social readjustment programmes - and then promised them chaos, murder, mayhem and other easy-to-relate-to and enjoyable diversions. Tonight, in Sector 255, *Sergeant Peppard's Lunatic Homicidal Crazies Brigade* attacks!

Peppard has discovered a drug which induces the 'Lemming Syndrome', and has used his position as the Production Supervisor of Crudbary's main plant in a Sector 256 to contaminate the company's sweets. In particular, he has contaminated the free sweets to be dropped on 255 during the PCs' shift. Once the Lemming Syndrome has taken hold and crowds are hurling themselves from high buildings, the Brigade will strike. From their hiding places in warehouses in neighbouring sectors, the futsies will stage a mass raid involving murder, arson, vandalism, general weirdness and all the other stuff that futsies do so well. The Judges should be too busy dealing with the mass suicides to cope properly. Cunning, eh?

Peppard has already sent out drugged samples to some block sweetshops to test its effects, hence the outbreaks of Lemming Syndrome to date (see below for more details or Prog 445). This candy is still being sold, as the briefing (Item 37) and the *Messages* show. The Lemming Syndrome is just a strange indefinable quality or 'something in the air'; nobody has realised that a drug is involved. But when everybody in the Sector starts having a nibble...

Peppard's plans are not going to run smoothly (awhh, you'd guessed), but more of that later.

A TWIST OF LEMMING

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT CASE REPORT

SUBJECT
The 'Lemming Syndrome'
FIRST RECORDED OCCURRENCE
25 October 2107, Flakey Foont block
INCIDENT REPORT
Citizens gathered in large crowds at the floor 98 podport and jumped from the lip. Unusually, all leapers fell in silence. By the time riot foam equipped units arrived and sprayed the port, 747 people had jumped to their deaths. 300 more citizens had gathered, but were prevented from jumping by the foam.
INVESTIGATION
Searches were conducted for sonic weapons, and contaminants in water, air and gas supplies; Psi-Div probed the area for signs of demonic influence. Weather Control was consulted on unusual atmospheric conditions that could affect citizens' behaviour. Survivors revealed nothing; most were just affected by a 'funny feeling'. Poor living conditions in Flakey Foont were assumed to be the cause.
HISTORY
The Lemming Syndrome has since occurred in 53 blocks. Most were slums, which supports the above theory.
PROCEDURE
Use an H-Wagon to spray the affected Lemming Syndrome rioters with riot foam. Little further attention need be paid to repeat occurrences.
FURTHER DATA
Lemmings were small rodents. Occasionally these creatures would gather together, undertake long and difficult treks to the sea and then hurl themselves to their deaths. The reasons for this behaviour were never established.

MESSAGES

These messages should be read to the players at the relevant points during the adventure. Obviously, not all of them are directly relevant to the PCs, but they do give the impression of a busy sector in action all around them.

Phase	Time	Message
1	23.06	The Lemming Syndrome has occurred again. 1042 citizens have already jumped from Bob Dylan block and Bob Geldof block is losing 89 per minute. All Judges in vicinity: proceed to blocks immediately.
The PCs are nowhere near these blocks and need do nothing.		
1	23.26	The gang who have been freeing perps from holding posts have been captured. Stay vigilant on this, just in case.
The PCs are probably responsible for the arrest of the perps.		
2	23.32	John Lennon block has a Lemming Syndrome incident in progress. This is a serious development. John Lennon is a high prestige block, not a slum. All Judges will be kept informed of further developments and the results of investigations now in progress.
If they think to call in, the PCs aren't needed at John Lennon.		
2	23.55	We have a bomb scare in the Philip K Dick block. Evacuation is now disorganised. Judges required for crowd control.
The PCs are too far away to get to the block in time.		
2	23.59	It's gonna start raining candy any minute now, Judges!
3	00.04	The Med Judges have now identified a drug in the blood-streams of all the Lemming Syndrome victims from Bob Dylan, Bob Geldof, John Lennon and other blocks. This is certainly the cause of the mass hysteria in these cases. Usually the phenomenon is a natural action and no contaminant or other physical factor is responsible. The source of the drug is not known. The blocks' food supplies are suspected.
3	00.09	There is definitely something up tonight with the crazies, Judges! 17 large groups of futsies have

been apprehended while lurking in derelict buildings near the edges of 255. Apparently some kind of mass attack was planned.

The PCs encountered a group for themselves. The 'was' may be a little premature; the attack is still planned!

3 00.18 We have more 'Lemming Syndrome' attacks all over the sector. Mark Twain, Elvis Costello and Ry Cooder blocks have all lost about a thousand civos each.

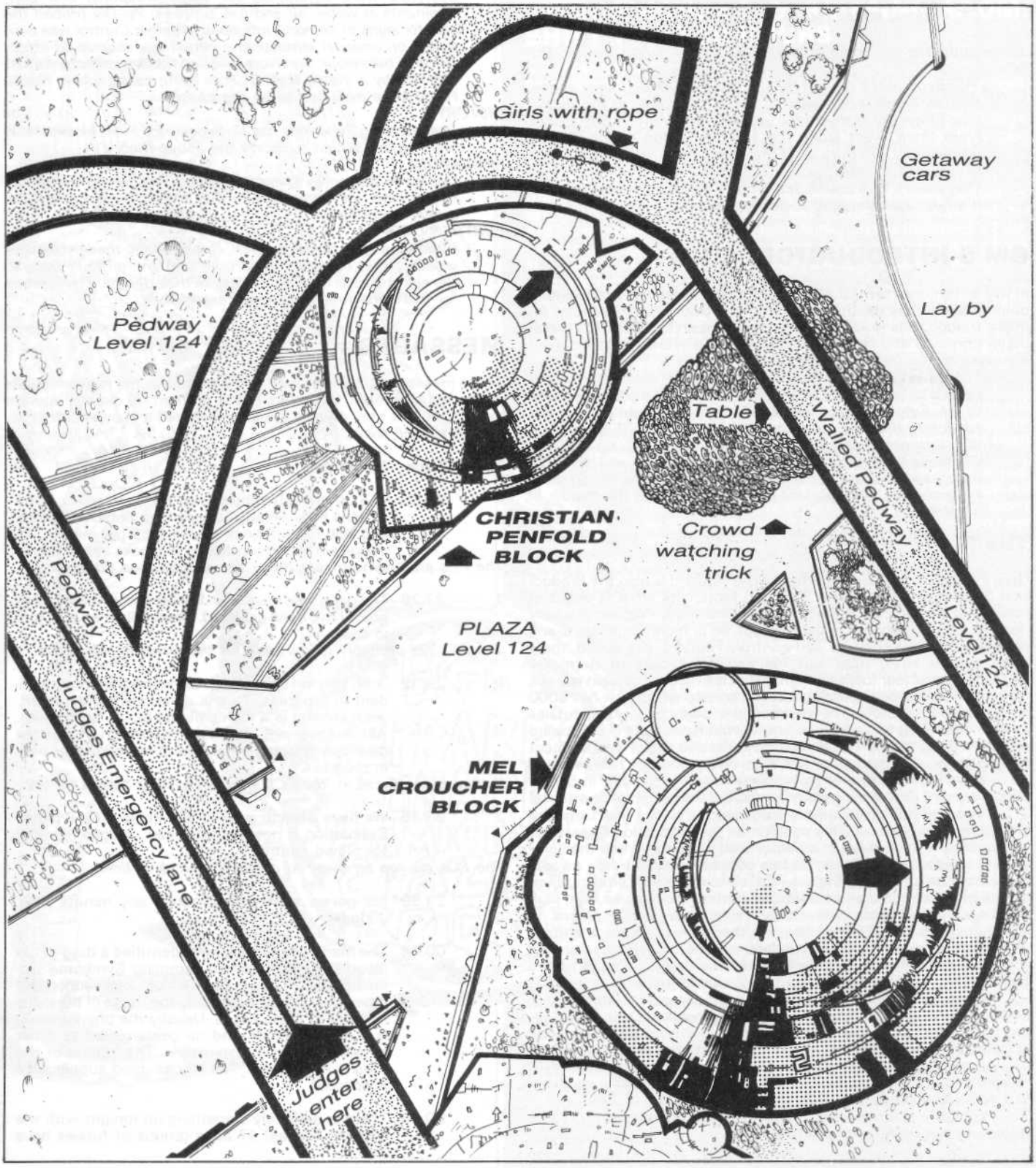
Again, the PCs are not needed at any of the affected blocks.

3 00.23 The bomb in the Phil Dick block has been found and defused. No-one was seriously injured, despite minor rioting.

3 00.30 All Lemming Syndrome citizens were affected by a drug. Med and Tech Judges are now certain that the drug was administered in the victims' food. Investigations to find what they did eat continue.

The drug is in some of the Crudbary's candy thanks to Peppard.

AUTOMATA TOWERS Sector 255



4 00.40 Crudbary are going to pull the trick with the sweets again at 02.00. They have permission. Once again, Judges are reminded that it is against Justice Department policy to accept sweeties from strangers.

4 00.50 Gangs of armed futsies are still being brought in. All we know at the moment is that an organised attack on Sector 255 was cancelled at the last minute. There have to be more of the creeps out there.

There are. Peppard cancelled the attack when Crudbary gave out uncontaminated free samples. The futsies he managed to contact are waiting for the drugged sweets to be dropped; the ones he didn't contact were captured by the Judges when they attacked.

4 00.58 Gribligs are showing up all over 255. Watch out for them, report any sightings and then stay with the little creeps till Pest Control arrive. Do not let any get away.

The PCs are due to encounter some Gribligs shortly after they get this message.

4 01.14 There has been a traffic accident on the junction between Paul Cockburn and Jervis Johnson skedways. Traffic is being diverted onto the Charlie Elliott slipzoom.

5 01.44 Replacement H-Wagons and Mantas have arrived. When we get pilots they'll be out and about again.

6 01.50 More of those futsies are lurking along the Sector boundary. Apparently, there was going to be a very big attack. Nearly 3000 crazies are now in the kook cubes so there can't be many more.

Only about 2000 or so. And any minute now...

ON PATROL

Remember that this adventure takes place at night. People and places cannot be seen as clearly as during the day, Lawmaster lights are on all the time, infra-red sights must be used on Lawgivers (but let the PCs tell you this for themselves), skill rolls (especially in combat) may be penalised due to the lack of light and so on.

PHASE 1: 23.00 - 23.30

At 23.09, as the Judges head northeast along the reasonably quiet skedways, slipzooms, and pedways (with Judge's lanes), the PCs notice a commotion in a plaza a few levels below where they are travelling. A large crowd (for this time of night) of about 100 people has gathered at one edge of the plaza.

If they watch for a few minutes, the Judges see a small man in a brown overcoat sliding playing cards around a low table. From time to time he accepts money from the spectators, does something with the cards and then gives back the money. The Judges see this sequence of events clearly once, however, so they cannot be sure whether the raincoated man usually wins or loses.

Any PC making a successful *Street Skill* roll will notice about 12 seedy-looking characters standing at the edge of the crowd watching the plaza rather than the card game. They are watching for Judges, and any PC who goes down to their level will be spotted. However, the lookouts won't think of actually looking *up*. A Judge with *Spot Hidden Weapon* may notice (+10% chance) that at least seven of the men have concealed pistols. The others have firebombs stuffed down their trousers, but the Judges won't be able to see these... Additionally, any Judge making a successful *SS* roll (at -20%) will realise that a group of unusually tall men are standing together near the centre of the crowd. Oddly, there are eleven rather flashy roadsters parked nearby; all have drivers at the wheel. The judges are witnessing the rescue (number 276) of another perp from a holding post.

Perpfree Inc is a large and well-organised gang of 53 men, who are part of the crowd (the rest are passing citizens), the drivers, and the bunko artist running the card game. Once the perp fastened to a holding post has agreed to pay 10,000 credits, the card game is set up. Naturally a crowd gathers, and under this cover - and that of the 28 tall gang members - one of the gang frees the perp from the holding post. This is done using a special key invented by Russell T'bag, the technical genius (see *Day in the Life* for details of Russell). The card game is rigged so that the punters win and stay in the game until the perp is free. The whole gang then hop into the cars and zoom away.

The Judges cannot just drive up on their Lawmasters and arrest the perps. The alarm will be raised and the card sharp and the newly-freed perp will leap into a car. The other gang members will try to pull the PCs off their bikes and beat them up. Some of the 'ordinary people' who are not members of the gang will help. If the Judges do end up in a fight with the 53 members of Perpfree and 20+D10 citizens it is likely that they will lose. The gang members involved should be rolled up as Heisters (p52, *GM's Book*). If the PCs survive they find a taunting note (you know what is taunting to your players, don't you?) and a pair of empty cuffs dangling from the holding post.

This note is the gang's downfall. In the excitement it has been scribbled on the back of a freehand map showing 60 of the Sector's holding posts. These are numbered, and the first 56 have been ticked. If the players work out that holding post '57' is where the gang will strike next give them some extra EPs. If they can't work it out for themselves Control will help, but no EPs for this. Post '57' is, however, several miles away - the PCs should call in with their information; this will lead to the arrest of the perps, but no EPs for the arrest for the PCs. That's what you get for stupid frontal attacks. Judges should know better.

Of course, it is possible for the PCs to surprise Perpfree Inc and friends. The lookouts are not *lookups*. The Judges are higher than the plaza level, so can drop down from above. Luck is, of course, working on the side of Justice. Three little girls - who shouldn't be out at this time of night but it's not an offence - are playing with a 7m skipping synthi-rope. The PCs can 'requisition' this and swing down on top of the card game. The Judge who does this must make an *Initiative* roll. Success indicates that he or she has landed on the card shark's table. Not surprisingly, he surrenders instantly - an unexpected Judge is quite a shock! Failure, however, indicates that the PC has fallen to the ground gracelessly (taking the usual damage for a 6m fall). The card shark will be stunned for D6 rounds by a flailing Judge's boot or the sudden appearance of said Judge. Whatever happens some of the 53 perps are bound to escape. This doesn't matter as long as the PCs get the card shark, as he will quite happily grass on every other member. If the PCs get in touch with control they can be picked up within 30 minutes as they return home.

Just as the PCs prepare to continue their patrol, they hear the question 'Please Sir, can we have our rope back?'

PHASE 2: 23.31 - 23.59

The PCs reach the northeast corner of the Sector at 23.34 and should travel along the east edge of 255. After 500m or so they will be stopped at a red light when a civo will cross the street in front of them. Halfway across he turns and yells into the gloom.

'Spug you anyway, you drokking ratfink!'.

'HAH! Ya dum Bimbo! Dem words s'legal now. An' dere's sum Stomming Judges behin' ya!'

The PCs should, of course, arrest the perp in the road for 'use

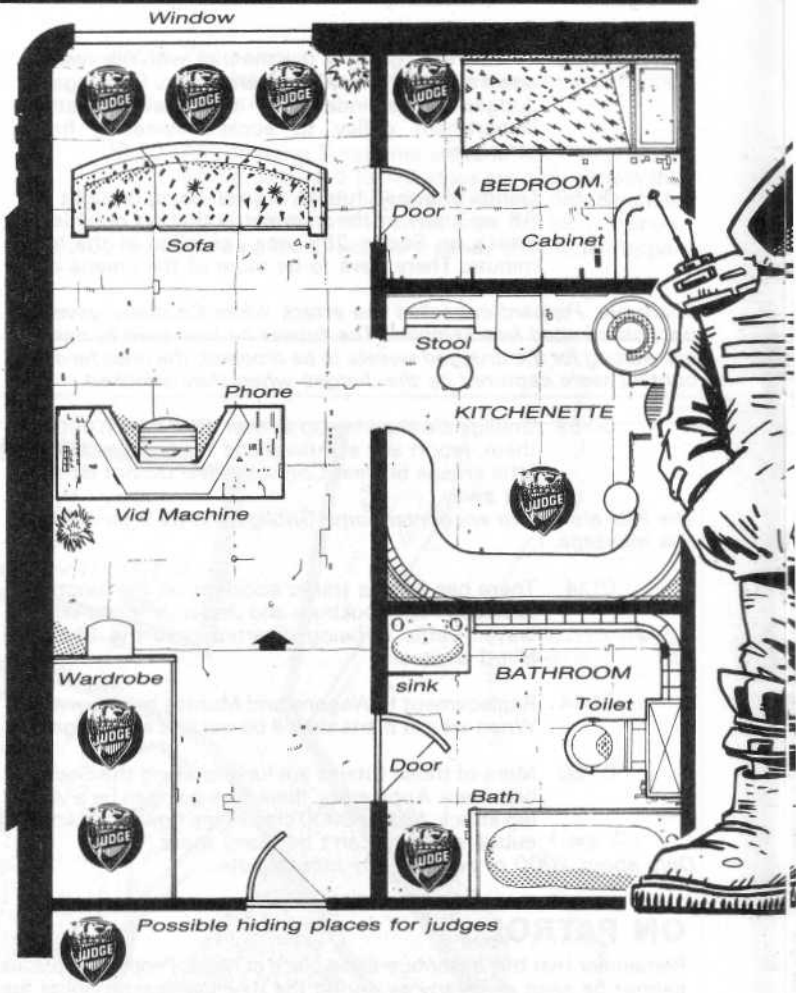
of illegal expletives'. Three months or a 1000 credit fine are suitable sentences. The second perp, a small man with a beard, runs off down a short, narrow alley. This leads to a through sector pedway, and if the PCs arrive within 30 seconds they will be able to spot the perp in the crowd. Otherwise, they will have to guess which way to go (left, right or down the strip). If they choose to go in the right direction (ie down the strip), they will have to leave their Lawmasters at the access strip. No vehicles are allowed on this particular pedway.

You should start using rounds, phases and actions as soon as the perp runs away. The perp on the crossing will freeze and surrender immediately. It will take several actions (drive, a few actions to get down the alley, a brake action, a dismount etc) to follow the bearded perp, and the Judges will end up *12 x actions* metres behind him. He has an *Initiative* of 29, so the Judges should be able to catch him without difficulty. It's more of a problem to follow the perp in the crowd (see *Judges Manual* p32, roll less than average of *SS* and *I*). The *Pursue Perp* special ability (see WD80) may also prove useful.

By the time the Judges are within 20 metres of the perp they will be in Sector 254. He leads them on a confusing chase through the night: up anti-grav chutes, down slipzooms, across plazas, leaping from pedway to pedway (regardless of the drop!) and so on. Eventually, he will just give up and collapse in an exhausted heap, but everyone is lost somewhere in 254! Unless someone makes a successful *SS* roll (at -25%), they will not be able to find the pedway to 255. The perp is guilty of illegal use of expletives (which isn't an offence in 254, let him use a few choice ones now) and assorted arrest offences (*GM's Book*, p58).

If the PCs are lost they will have to get directions back to 255. Professional pride should prevent them asking citizens, and contacting their Lawmasters will not produce a response. They will have to approach a Sector 254 Judge, who won't be entirely convinced that these sorry-looking types are actually Judges at all. Asking for directions! Hah! Jimps the lot of 'em. It's 'Up against the wall and drop those phoney Lawgivers' time. It's dark, and the Judge will take a lot of convincing. Just to add insult to injury, make sure that the PCs are asked about leaving their Lawmasters on automatic defence. They didn't? You sure these guys ain't jimps?

Eventually the PCs are able to head back to 255. As they come back to where they left the Lawmasters, the PCs encounter Sergeant Peppard's Lunatic Homicidal Crazies Brigade for the first time. On the pedway are a group of people standing in a circle. These futsies couldn't agree on who got what weapon, so they are now playing spin the bottle to decide who gets a gun... This is getting frustrating, as the bottle keeps pointing at Lunatic Homicidal Crazies who already have guns, or at no-one in particular. Pretty soon, they are going to start killing each other. The other problem is that the ring of people, a suspicious pile of weapons and the bottle are blocking the pedway and no Judge can ignore that kind of thing.



The futsies have standard statistics (*GM's Book*, p50). The pile of weapons includes 8 clubs, 3 electro-prods, 6 knives, 2 las-knives, 4 hand-guns, 3 hand bombs, 5 spit pistols and 6 stump guns. Armed only with Lawgivers the Judges will almost certainly lose a fight with the Brigade members. The Lawmasters and their weaponry can be reached in two turns by an indirect route (ie not running through the futsies).

When the PCs reach their Lawmasters everything in the stowage compartments has been plundered and the bike computers have been smashed, regardless of whether they were left on automatic or not. The scatter guns are still in place, so the PCs may be able to Stumm the approaching mob of futsies who are D4+3 rounds away.

Once armed with scatter guns the PCs should be able to make a mass arrest. Questioning the futsies will produce only a few random gibberings and dark hints of what is to come: 'Tonight! Tonight! HAhahahaha!'; 'It's a pretty city...'; 'Glowing eyes, cats, rats, cats...'; 'Pennsylvania six five oh oh oh...'; and 'Blood and Chocolate... yummy, yummy...' If you feel that the gibbering about 'Blood and Chocolate' might give the game away at too early a stage, ignore it. Control will order the PCs to resume their patrol. Replacement Lawmasters will arrive with the pick-up squad for the futsies.

PHASE 3: 00.00 - 00.39

Midnight. Weather Control have kindly cleared any clouds away and the moon is full. Crowds of citizens fill the streets. The air above Sector 255 is full of hovertrucks. Their cargo bay doors open and Crudbary's promotion starts, the whole scene lit by gentle moonlight and neon. Thousands of little Crudbary's Umpty Candy boxes, each with its own tiny parachute, drop all over the Sector.

Before the boxes reach ground they burst, scattering sweets in a rain of candy shrapnel. The citizens start cheering and lunging for the Umpty. Despite the crowds, however, the whole business is peaceful as the hovertrucks keep flying over and dropping more than enough sweets for everyone.

However, Grag Peppard's plans to drug all of Sector 255 and cause a mass outbreak of the Lemming Syndrome have gone wrong. The 'wrong' batch of Crudbary's Umpty candy has been dropped, and most of the sweets are not drugged. A few blocks (see *Messages*) are affected by the Lemming Syndrome, but no connection between this and the Umpty has been made yet. For the most part all the PCs have to do is follow their route, listen to the messages coming over the radio and watch the citizens enjoying themselves.

Of course, there are bound to be one or two perps who think they can get away with something.

By 00.28 the Judges are heading towards Canavan's Blight Club down a dark, deserted street on city bottom (everyone has gone up to the parks and plazas to get some sweets). The relative peace of the scene is disturbed by a 'Chee! Chup! Chee!'. A Griblig, and somewhere close by. It is not until the Judges turn the next corner that they find the creature, lying stone dead at one side of the roadway. Several Crudbary's wrappers are scattered around the body.

The Griblig is a victim of the Lemming Syndrome. After eating several bits of the Umpty, it's tiny (but very intelligent) little brain decided to end it all by jumping out of a window above the street. The PCs may reach the nearly correct conclusion that the Umpty poisoned the Griblig, and call in to Control about the matter - but why have none of the humans eating the candy been poisoned? Only about 0.00001% of the sweets are drugged, so the Lemming Syndrome incidents have not been connected with Crudbary's candy. Contaminated sweets were sold through block sweetshops, so the slight rise in the rate of Lemming Syndrome occurrences is not high enough to register.

Peppard is not at all happy with his failure. He wanted everyone to be leaping by this point! He is hurriedly preparing a repeat performance with the 'right' batch of properly drugged sweets. This is why, at 00.38, as the Judges approach Canavan's Blight Club, a nearby PA screen flickers on. After the Crudbary's logo and company song (*Only the sickliest, stickiest Umpty... Tastes like Umpty never tasted beee-fore!!!*), a large man appears on the screen. He smiles at the camera, and announces that Crudbary's are so pleased with the response to the first Umpty drop they are going to do it again at 02.00!

This man is Peppard, who is desperate to bring 255 to its knees tonight. He has had great difficulty in holding back Sergeant Peppard's Lunatic Homicidal Crazies Brigade after the failure of the first drop, and groups of futsies have been arrested all over the Sector. Peppard has organised the second drop without any authority from Crudbary (Justice Department, has, however, authorised the second drop). The robots piloting the hovertrucks have been ordered to return to the plant and pick up another batch of sweets. This time, there will be no mistake: Sector 255 is going to get the Lemming Syndrome.

PHASE 4: 00.40 - 01.15

As the Judges pull away from Canavan's Blight Club on the next leg of their patrol, a figure waves them down from a darkened doorway. The man is about 2m tall, with a small moustache and vividly coloured clothes: the missing Judge Graham of the Wally Squad. In case the PCs do not realise who he is (why weren't they listening to the briefing?) Graham will introduce himself. He has a strange story to tell:

Judge Kinane and I had to pull a bank heist so that the Umpty Baggers we were trying to infiltrate would think we were perps - standard Wally Squad procedure. Kinane waited in the car while I went into Bucknard's bank, but as soon as I was in the lobby a civo in a zoot suit shoved a gun into my ribs. I was bundled into a car, my stump gun was taken and the next thing I knew was when I woke up at their hideout.

They didn't believe me at first, but in the end I convinced them that I was what I claimed to be: a perp with no scruples but lots of talent. They are Umpty baggers, alright, with a source of genuine Uncle Umps! We already knew that somebody was bagging in 255, but we didn't know who. These creeps have a bit more ambition and they don't like competition one little bit. The legal Crudbary's Umpty is killing their business. So the gang is going to stiff the Crudbary management, starting with the guy just on the tube, the Production Manager. You've got to do something! I won't let them kill anyone, but I'm going to need help to catch them all.

I've got to go, or they'll start to suspect something's up. Don't follow me, or you'll give the game away. You don't exactly look like civos, you know!

Judge Graham
S **2** I **59** CS **52** DS **39** TS **32** SS **55** MS **29** PS **24**

Special Abilities: Duck, Fast; Strong Strike, Knock Out; Aura of Cool, Sector Knowledge.

Graham is an efficient Judge, and will not take kindly to his instructions being ignored. If the PCs follow him he warns them once not to blow his case, and then demands to speak to Control so that the PCs can be ordered not to interfere. He believes that the best way to handle the case is for him to work on the inside, while other Judges protect the homes and lives of the Crudbary executives.

When (as they should do) the PCs call Control for instructions, Graham's warning about Crudbary's Production Supervisor and the other executives should be passed on. MAC will identify Crudbary's Production Supervisor as Grag Peppard (but at this point in the adventure he's a possible victim entitled to protection) after a search through the files. The PCs are told that: *Peppard is one of the main driving forces behind Crudbary's growth, and he made all the arrangements for the Umpty drops on 255. He was the one who made the announcement about the 02.00 drop, by the way. That's been cleared. He lives in Apartment 14, floor 132, Jeff Minter block. You are assigned to protect him. Squad Abbot is already on the way as well. Meet them there.* Jeff Minter block is on the PCs patrol route, and they should arrive at about 01.01.

Judges Abbot (Judge-5), Daltrey and Merphos (Judge-4s) are already at Peppard's apartment. As the senior Judge present, Abbot knocks on the door and, when there is no reply, sends one of the PCs to get a duplicate key from block administration. Peppard is not home, and keeps the place looking completely normal - just in case he is ever crime-blitzed as a reformed futsie. Abbot is relieved at this - Graham's Umpty Baggers haven't got here before them and there is no point scaring an honest citizen, after all. He orders everyone to hide (possible hiding places are shown on the map of Peppard's apartment).

After a few minutes (let the PCs get really uncomfortable and stiff in their hiding places, have noisy groups of juves walk down the hall, you know the sort of thing...) Graham and the baggers arrive. There are two of the mob's leaders (Mobsters - *GM's Book*, p52) and four large thugs (Henchmen - see the *GM's Book*, p53) armed with stump guns. The leader types are here to make sure their rather stupid underlings manage to murder the right person. They try the door and kick it down if necessary. Graham is pushed into the apartment first (they don't quite trust him, and he makes an excellent shield).

When it's obvious to them that Peppard isn't home (or the Judges try to arrest them), one of the leaders jumps to the conclusion that Graham has tipped someone off. Pausing only to give Graham the benefit of his razor-like wit, 'Drokk! He's gone... ya tipped someone off ya creep. Oh, ya dirty spug... I'm gonna kill ya fer that. Do it, boys!', he opens fire into the apartment. Graham tries

to leap over the sofa to get away - and he might land on some Judges behind it. Abbot and his squad burst out of their hiding places (as, presumably, do the PCs). Getting out of the wardrobe, kitchenette or bathroom takes one action.

The Judges should have no trouble in taking the thugs. Their leaders surrender as soon as they are wounded or their subordinates are out of the fight. The mobsters have the key to a hotel room and a few other clues to their activities (pieces of Umpty Candy, etc). Control will order Squad Abbot and Graham (if he is still alive) to follow up these leads to the Umpty Bagging mob as soon as possible. The PCs are ordered back on patrol.

Peppard isn't in his apartment because he is arranging the dropping of drugged sweets over Sector 255. One item that needs arranging is the killing of other Crudbary executives. Peppard has decided on a sec-cond drop all on his own, and doesn't want the company interfering in his plans. This time, everything will be right.

PHASE 5: 01.16 - 01.45

By 01.20 the PCs are back on patrol and probably wondering what is going on. Things are about to become clearer. This begins with a message from Control for them. This isn't in the general *Messages* section because it is just for them:

Attention Squad (name of squad leader). Interesting little item here regarding Peppard. We haven't managed to locate him, but it turns out he was a kook. He's done three months for a futsie incident, but was freed after tests indicated he was perfectly normal again. Just a momentary lapse, apparently. After this, he set up a few futsie rehabilitation clubs and readjustment groups - but a lot of cured futsies go in for that kind of thing. They get some sort of moral conscience and want to help others who went through the same thing.

The PCs may just dismiss this as a red synthi-herring, but if they don't have doubts about Crudbary's Umpty, they soon will have!

At 01.31 the Judges are on city bottom, circling the wall of Bob Geldof block. The mess from the Lemming Syndrome incident earlier in the shift has been cleared up (apart from a few bloodstains) and the streets are empty. Suddenly, ahead of the Judges there is a most peculiar scene. From a window some 50m up a stream of Gribligs are plummeting downwards and landing in the road. In the process they are making a terrible mess and, um, dying. All this happens in absolute silence, without a single 'Chup! Chup! Chee!' from the Gribligs. This is another outbreak of Lemming Syndrome.

The Judges are under no obligation to protect the lives of the Gribligs, so they need not call for riot foam-equipped H-wagons. They should, however, report the incident to Control so that exterminators can be despatched (if they are still needed at the rate the Gribligs are jumping). The PCs will be told to find and stop the Gribligs escaping into the rest of the block.

The Gribligs are jumping from the Geldof block sweetshop. The door to the shop has been broken open by a drunk (who is lying just inside it). The Gribligs are in the back room, and are sombrely queueing below the window, waiting for their turn to jump. If the Judges shoot at any of the Gribligs, they will even hurl themselves into the line of fire! Behind them is the cause of their behaviour: a large crate of sweets. Some of the Gribligs are still holding chunks of candy in their paws, and their are wrappers and half-eaten sweets everywhere. All the sweets are Crudbary's Umpty Candy, plainly marked and wrapped as such. These are some of Peppard's test batch that was sent out before the full promotional drop.

The exterminators will arrive in about three minutes, but the Gribligs will have killed themselves by that time anyway. As the PCs report in on this incident, they will be interrupted by a message from Control that comes in over the Lawmaster computers:

'Urgent. Squad (name of squad leader). We've just received a call from John Lazenby, the Crudbary Manager. He lived in Sector 128 and had only just heard about the repeat drop of free chocolate when he called.'

The screen blanks, and then a vid-phone recording is played. Lazenby, an angry-looking man, stands in the foreground.

'Listen, I don't know what's going on in 255. This second drop wasn't planned! We can't afford to do that sort of thing twice! I don't know what the loony Peppard is playing at, but he hasn't told us about it! He must have decided to do it all himself and I jus-' BLAM! BLAM!

Lazenby gasps and drops from view. Control cuts the recording and comes back online:

'Those Umpty Baggers must have got to him after all.'

The PCs should, of course, report what the Gribligs are doing, apparently as a result of eating Crudbary candy. With the clues the PCs now have, they should realise that Peppard has an ulterior motive for the second drop of sweets, that the sweets are probably drugged and that this may have something to do with the gangs of futsies that have been reported during the shift. If they report their deductions, the EP rewards for this adventure should be increased. If they don't manage to make the connections, Control will. The PCs will be ordered to resume their patrol, while Control will assure them that the second drop of candy will be stopped and Peppard picked up for questioning at the very least.

PHASE 6: 01.46 - 2.00

Peppard killed Lazenby (not the Umpty Baggers) while the Judges were at his apartment. Peppard didn't expect Lazenby to find out about the announcement of a second drop which is why he was on the phone when he was killed. A squad of Judges in Sector 128 was despatched to the scene, and were just in the right place to arrest the Umpty Baggers who had come to kill Lazenby! At 01.46 the PCs receive the following message from Control:

Apparently the Umpty Baggers didn't kill Lazenby at all. They have just been arrested outside his block. They were genuinely surprised to find out that he was already dead and surrendered quietly.

It should now be obvious to the PCs that Peppard killed Lazenby.

Sector 255's PA screens now show a continual stream of announcements by the Sector's Chief Judge. All are warnings not to eat any Crudbary's Umpty. That's all the civos are told. Public reaction to this is predictable: Judges are cursed as spoilsports, things are thrown at PA screens and complaints are long and loud. 'Didn't I eat fifty-five just an hour ago and weren't they beautiful? Whatayagot to say to that, you ratfink Judges?' How about three months for an illegal expletive? Maybe the PCs are attacked as well. No? Well, it was just a thought...

Peppard is now at Crudbary's plant in Sector 256, overseeing the loading of drugged sweets onto the hovertrucks. If the PCs think, they should realise that there is nowhere else for him to be. You should award extra EPs to any players who request permission from Control to deviate from their patrol routes and check this out. If they don't think of this Control calls them at 01.48 and orders them to check the Crudbary factory, which is only just inside 256. The PCs arrive at the factory at 01.51, just in time to see a fleet of hovertrucks heading for Sector 255! Shots fired at these trucks will have no effect. The robot pilots have orders to fly over 255, drop the sweets and then self-destruct, thus destroying the evidence. And Peppard is currently engaged in destroying the evidence inside the plant: his drug dispensers on the production line.

When the PCs arrive at the factory its gates are open. Any Judge who makes a successful *Street Skill* roll will notice that a light is moving about on the ground floor, and that it goes out as soon as they enter the compound. Peppard has seen the Judges arriving.

'Sergeant' Grag Peppard

S **3** I **69** CS **46** DS **30** TS **50** SS **28** MS **5** PS **3**

Special Abilities: Avoid Shots, Recover Quickly; Crack Shot; Disable Mechanism.

There are two entrances to the factory building: large double doors for trucks (which are raised to about 1.5m) and a smaller side door. The side door is made of steel and firmly locked. Nothing short of a Cyclops laser will get it open. If the PCs choose that route Peppard will flee to the roof and use his jetpack to escape. How else did you think he had managed to get here after killing Lazenby in Sector 128?

If the PCs come in through the main doors Peppard will be hiding behind them, and as the Judges enter he will try to drop the doors on them for D6 damage with a +3 effect modifier. He does this if he rolls less than his *Initiative* as the PCs enter; failure indicates that the doors roll down just before the PCs come in. This could have equally disastrous results of the PCs were attempting to drive in on their Lawmasters! Each Judge gets the opportunity to dodge the doors by making *I* or *DS* rolls. In the confusion Peppard will push over a stack of crates and retreat to the point marked 'X'. He will let fly with his stump gun at any obvious targets, and wait for an opportunity to use his next surprise.

Peppard's position is next to the controls for the factory. If any of the PCs venture onto the areas marked by dotted circles Peppard will open the lids of the candy vats below! Anyone on the lid will fall in, and then be covered by molten candy as Peppard trips another lever. A Judge who is trapped in the candy can do nothing to save himself and will drown unless dragged clear in 2D4 rounds. At this point Peppard will retreat to the back room, strap on his jetpack and fly out of the window. If he manages to escape he should not be caught, but used for sequels to this adventure by you (or maybe me).

Just as the PCs are slapping on the cuffs, dragging fellow Judges from the vat or commiserating with each other about the one that got away, it's 02.00. All around the Crudbary factory, from every warehouse and shack, come the futsies of Sergeant Peppard's Lunatic Homicidal Crazies Brigade! And as the only figures of authority in sight, the Judges will attract their attention. Dramatic license means that their shots miss, but the Judges have only one round

to mount their Lawmasters, start them, accelerate and be 100m away or the futsies will engulf them. If the Judges fail to do this they will need to make DS rolls to fight their way through the crowd, fire the bike cannon, or drop stumm grenades, or something, anything, which will earn them an extra round to escape. If they don't manage this, they will die in D6+6 phases. Yes, die. You can't fight a crowd of 812 futsies unless rescued. Such is life. Actually, it's death we're talking about here. Such is death.

The nearest place to deal with the futsies is the Justice Department Armoury in 255. Anyway, the futsies are heading in that direction. The place is almost entirely deserted as most Judges are out shooting down Crudbary's hovertrucks or dealing with mass outbreaks of the Lemming Syndrome. Despite the warnings most citizens are stuffing themselves silly with the free sweets.

The defence of the armoury could be run as a wargame if your tastes are that way inclined. Or you can allow the PCs to hold off the futsies with riot foam and a few heavy weapons. If they roleplay a good defence, let them win.

WE HOPE YOU HAVE ENJOYED THE SHOW...

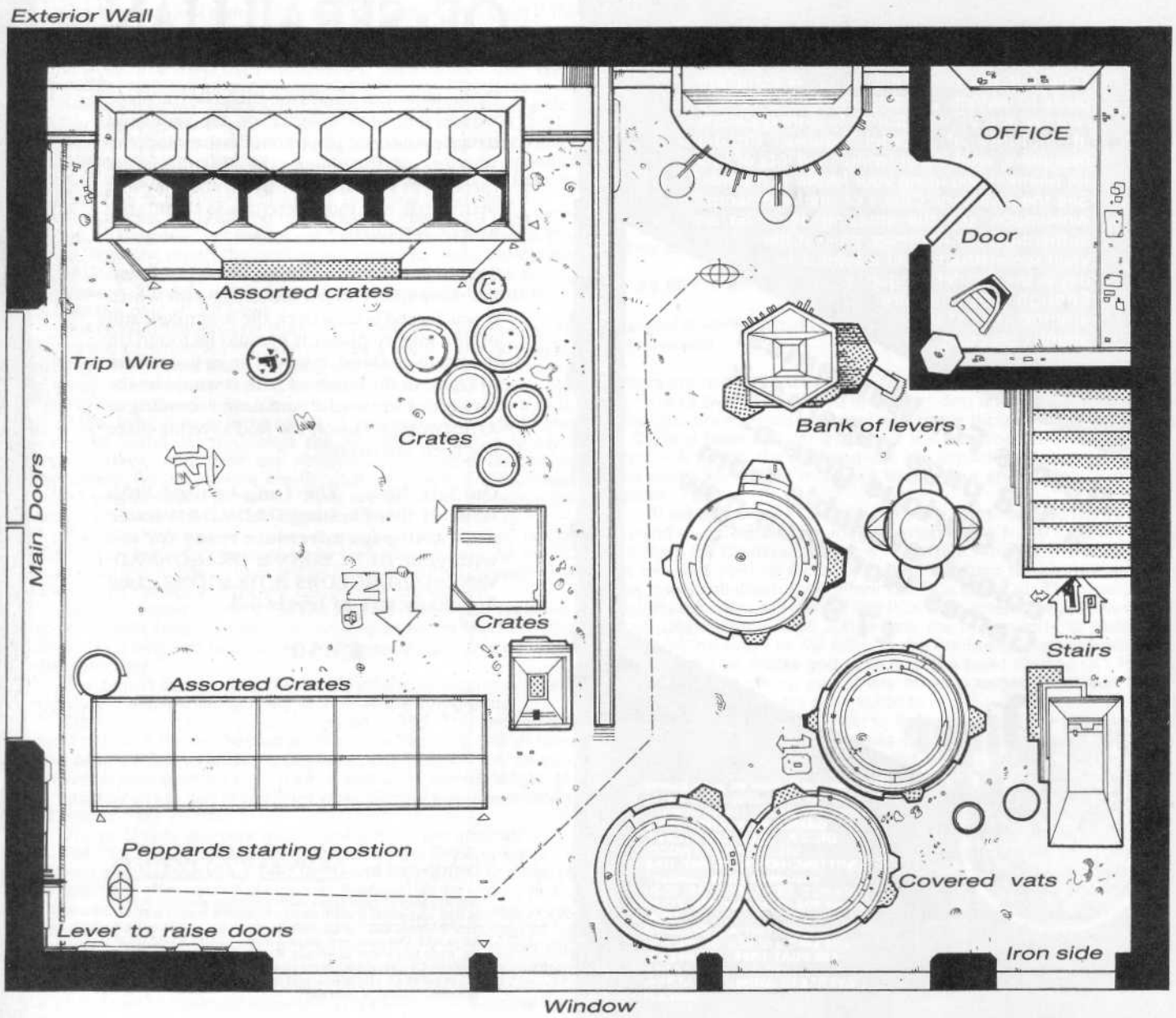
You may want to change this adventure to suit your own group. For example, you may not think there is enough combat; this is easily rectified, but combat is secondary in *JD* games for most people. The ending can be rather bloody. You may feel that your PCs might find it more enjoyable to fly an H-Wagon around locating and destroying the Crudbary hovertrucks. Or they could end up on the streets trying to contain the Lemming Syndrome. Or you could use the ending as it stands, but change it slightly to give an *Assault on Precinct 13* feel as the crazies close in slowly.

At various points in the adventure, Control issues the PCs with instructions and gives them results if they don't make the correct deductions. This may give the impression that the PCs are just puppets being ordered about. This is not true at all. The players should be encouraged to think about their problems and reach conclusions. Control is really only there to drop hints. What seems clear to a GM might be very obscure to a player!

As the adventure stands, 100 EPs is about right for surviving *A Night in the Death*. There are plenty of opportunities to die, but there are also plenty of chances for good roleplaying and using the *JD* system as it was meant to be used.

Creating a sequel should be fairly straightforward. Maybe Russell T'bag had another key hidden away somewhere. There are still plenty of futsies lurking around the Sector. The Lemming Syndrome is in full swing. Peppard may have escaped. Has anyone heard from the Friends of Dredd recently? And, of course, the Gribligs, are growing in numbers all the time...

SMALL FACTORY UNIT



HAND·OF DESTINY

FATE POINTS IN WARHAMMER FANTASY ROLEPLAY

by

GRAEME DAVIS

Fate Points are an important part of the ***Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay*** rules, allowing characters to cheat death and live to fight another day. They are, however, given very little space in the rule book. The following notes are intended to clarify Fate Points and their use, and deal with any uncertainties which may arise from their previously scanty treatment.

·WHAT ARE FATE POINTS?·

The function of Fate Points in *WFRP* is threefold:

First, they allow Our Heroes to make miraculous escapes, as in all the best adventure stories. *WFRP* adventurers can dodge falling stone blocks by a whisker, survive slipping off a cliff by landing in convenient patch of bushes, run unscathed through a hail of arrows and so on. With hairs-breadth escapes and twists of fate, players are willing to risk their characters, making for a faster and more exciting game than would otherwise be the case.

Secondly, Fate Points reflect the idea that Our Heroes have a destiny which sets them above the rest of the world. Just as in films John Wayne can make it to the machine-gun nest with marines being cut down around him, so *WFRP* adventurers can take great risks - and get away with them.

Lastly, combat in *WFRP* is more dangerous than in other RPGs. This is partly because combat is dangerous in real life, and partly because if combat is always the easy way out, players will be less inclined to try something a little more subtle, like thinking! Obviously, there will be some occasions when fighting is the only course of action, and even in the ordinary run of things, characters can get killed very easily if the players don't learn caution. Fate Points can give the rash player a second chance and the unlucky player an even break. Of course, if the players insist on rushing into every situation waving swords about they will quickly run out of Fate Points, and permanent death will follow with grim inevitability. Most players will get the idea fairly quickly, and realise that a gung-ho approach is not necessarily the best.

·WHEN TO USE FATE POINTS·

Basically, a Fate Point can be expended whenever a character is about to die - in combat, through traps or accidents, as a result of poison or disease, or in any other circumstances. Instead of dying, the character expends a Fate Point and then the GM has to devise some way of ensuring that the character survives.

·HOW TO GM FATE POINTS·

When a character expends a Fate Point, it is up to the GM to come up with something that will prevent the character dying. No doubt the player in question will be full of helpful suggestions, but you should be careful to ensure that the character is not too much better off as a result of expending a Fate Point. Fate Points *are* powerful, but not as powerful as, say, *D&D/AD&D wishes*. The character should survive the situation, but that's it. It can sometimes be difficult to come up with a suitably tailored *deus ex machina* on the spur of the moment, so here are some ideas.

·COMBAT·

Here is an example of the *wrong* way to deal with Fate Points in combat:

Clem Shirestock is in a hard fight with a band of Chaos Mutants. He has been reduces to 0 ***Wounds****, and a critical hit result indicates that he is about to have his head removed by a neatly-swung axe. Clem's player spends a Fate Point. The GM ignores the critical effect, but Clem is still on 0* ***Wounds****, so the next hit Clem takes is another critical. Clem's player spends another Fate Point...*

At this rate, Clem will get through his three Fate Points in as many rounds; their only effect will be that he will die three rounds later than he would have done otherwise.

Let's try that again...

Clem takes a hit which takes him below 0 ***Wounds****. It is a hit to the body, and the critical result indicates that he will be disembowelled and die immediately. Clem's player spends a Fate Point, and is told by the GM that everything goes black. While the player is wondering what has happened, the GM makes a note that Clem has been struck by the flat of the blade and flung against the wall, hitting his head and knocking himself unconscious. He may wake up several hours later (still on 0* ***Wounds****) to find himself:*

being tended by his victorious comrades;
imprisoned in the mutants' lair with his defeated comrades;
left for dead, stripped of all equipment and valuables, and all alone.

The trick is to use your imagination. This can also provide an opportunity to direct things if the players have gone a little off the track. You, the GM, control when and where characters wake up, and you can use this to your advantage. If, for example, the adventurers have missed a vital clue about the lair of the evil Necromancer, they may wake up in a small village, having been found left for dead in the forest. As their wounds are tended, the villagers will tell them about the black tower beyond the wood, where hideous screams are heard at night, and about the recently-dug graves which have been found torn open, apparently from the inside...

There are also some things you will have to watch. Remember, the *players* know that the character who expended a Fate Point isn't dead, but their *characters* don't. You must make sure that the players act accordingly. You should also avoid being vindictive yourself - if a character appears to be dead, an Orc or mutant will leave him/her and move on to another foe; they won't generally have another few stabs 'just to make sure'.

·TRAPS AND ACCIDENTS·

When a character expends a Fate Point to avoid being killed by a trap or by some other mischance, there are two possible approaches to what happens next:

The Indiana Jones Method - The spikes, spears, falling blocks or whatever, miss by a whisker, grazing the character's armour, possibly destroying a backpack or some other item of equipment, but leaving the character unscathed.

The Tom and Jerry Method - The character is spiked, or speared, or flattened, or whatever, but he walks away. *Wounds* may be reduced to zero, and some or all of the character's equipment may be destroyed, but the character is still just about alive.

·POISON AND DISEASE·

When a character expends a Fate Point to avoid death from poison or disease, the effects of the posion or disease miraculously stop when the character is on the point of death, and normal recovery ('enhanced' as usual by medical attention) can begin immediately. For example:

Clem Shirestock is bitten in the leg by a Giant Rat in the course of an adventure and the GM rolls D100 to see if the bite carries the Black Plague. It does, and Clem must make a Disease test, rolling his ***Toughness*** *x 10 or less on D100*

ILLUSTRATED BY PETE KNIFTON

in order to avoid the infection. Clem's Toughness is 3, and the player rolls 98 - a failure. A week or so later, Clem is struck down with the Plague, and becomes progressively worse over the next few days. After five days, his ***Strength*** *and* ***Toughness*** *reach zero, and the player expends a Fate Point to prevent Clem from dying.*

Clem lapses into a coma, and for two day he hovers on the brink of death. On the third day, he opens his eyes and asks for food - he has begun to recover.

·HOW CHARACTERS GAIN FATE POINTS·

Fate Points are an undeniably valuable commodity in *WFRP*. The next question is, of course, how does a character get any more? There are four ways in which a character can acquire Fate Points:

Character Generation - Every PC acquires Fate Points at the generation stage. This is explained on pp15-16 of the *WFRP* rule book.

Divine Favour 1 - Clerics and Druids may gain Fate Points as a result of a particularly successful roll on the *Cleric Advance Table* (p150) or the *Druid Advance Table* (p152).

Divine Favour 2 - At the GM's option, a deity may give a character a Fate Point instead of a *blessing* (see pp193-4). As with all blessings, the character in question must be genuinely deserving, and must have done the deity a great service, such as performing some quest (*not* a *Trial*) at the deity's behest. As with the advance tables, only one Fate Point is awarded.

Adventuring - If a character succeeds in staving off a great, world-shaking menace of divine origin (such as the machinations of a Chaos God), a Fate Point may be awarded along with the usual Experience Points. The menace must be comparable in scale to the situation in *Shadows over Bögenhafen*, and it must be apparent that but for the character's action an appalling disaster would have taken place. Don't let fast-talking players convince you that wiping out a couple of dozen cultists is the same thing.

·HOW CHARACTERS DO NOT GAIN FATE POINTS·

Characters may *not* buy Fate Points with Experience Points under any circumstances. Never, never, never. No how, no way.

·HOW CHARACTERS LOSE FATE POINTS·

Just as characters can gain Fate Points through divine favour, so they can lose them through divine disfavour. A bad roll on the *Cleric/Druid Advance Tables* can have this effect, and Fate Points can also be lost as the reverse of a blessing. If a character does a deity a great disservice, the deity may strip the character of a Fate Point until suitable reparation is made.

A character who sells out to Chaos and becomes a Chaos Warrior or a Chaos Sorcerer exchanges all his/her Fate Points for Chaos Gifts and an easy road to power. This will be more fully explained in *Realm of Chaos*.

·NPCS AND FATE POINTS·

As a rule, NPCs do not have Fate Points - part of their function, as explained above, is to distinguish the PCs from the rest of the world.

However, you may allow an NPC to have Fate Points under special circumstances. Say you are developing an NPC who is going to be the bane of the characters' lives for a long time to come : a mega-baddie of the stature of Fu Manchu or Professor Moriarty. The players may think that their enemy has been defeated, but by using Fate Points the villain lives on to fight another day. After enough time to recover, re-equip and recruit new henchmen he/she reappears at an opportune moment to take a devastating revenge.

Dracula, for example, must have got through a heck of a lot of Fate Points in the cycle of Hammer films between 1958 and 1973. Despite being staked, burnt, blasted to ash by sunlight, doused in running water and heaven knows what else, he always found a way of coming back to unlife at the start of the next picture.

You should keep this sort of treatment for special occasions, however. It will be easy to demoralise the players if every minor villain they encounter develops the habit of coming back to get them after being 'killed' three or four times. However, if you give a few Fate Points to the one leading baddie in your campaign, and have him or her pop up a couple of times to get one back on Our Heroes it can keep them on their toes. Be careful not to let the players cotton onto what's happening, though, or they will take to dismembering and burning every body they can 'just to be sure', and that isn't part of *WFRP*.

So there you are - that's what Fate Points are all about. In conclusion, there are two main points to be stressed.

Firstly, be imaginative when GMing the use of Fate Points, as it can add a lot to the tension and enjoyment of the game. Secondly, be mean in handing them out. Each Fate Point effectively gives a character an extra life, and that makes them very powerful and very precious things indeed. Spreading too many of them about will lead players to adopt the Rambo attitude every time, which devalues both the concept of Fate Points and the game itself.

LIFE & DEATH & AN AMERICAN CHAINSAW

New Equipment Cards for Chainsaw Warrior

by Jervis 'Throat-ripper' Johnson

'He edged gingerly down the corridor, every sense alert. As he neared the corner he silently flipped off the safety catch on the REAPER machine-gun fitted to the stabilising harness on his hip, and then listened carefully for any sound. His artificially enhanced hearing picked up a tiny, almost imperceptible rasping noise. Someone - or something - was waiting for him.

'In one fluid motion he stepped around the corner, IR goggles allowing him to spot instantly the foul mutated creature that was lurking in the shadows. The REAPER spat, its muzzle-flash illuminating the corridor as it spewed .50 cal high explosive destruction. The vile thing was killed instantly, the impact of the bullets picking it up and hurling it 20 feet down the corridor where it smashed, a ruined bloody mess, into the wall.

'Striding towards the lift shaft the creature had been guarding he glanced at the digital timer on his wrist and scowled. Only 25 minutes left, only 25 minutes to save New York...'

The following new cards can be added to your game of **Chainsaw Warrior**. Carefully remove the insert in the centre of the magazine and cut out the cards from the sheet. Then simply add the cards to the appropriate Equipment decks when equipping your warrior at the start of the game.

They are treated just like every other Equipment card, but as usual each has its own special characteristics, which are described below.

CARD DESCRIPTIONS

CLAW-15 - *Combat Shotgun*

CLAW stands for CLose Assault Weapon, an appropriate description for this deadly short range weapon. The CLAW-15 is favoured by Police Assault Teams operating in built-up areas, who found that standard assault rifle bullets have a disconcerting ability to travel through several walls and injure or kill innocent bystanders. The CLAW-15, on the other hand, combines terrific stopping power with only limited penetration, making it the ideal weapon for use in inhabited non-combat areas.

H&W REAPER - *Fully Stabilised Personal Hi-Calibre Machine Gun*

The REAPER is probably the most efficient anti-personnel weapon in the world. It is fitted to a specially designed stabilising mount worn on the firer's hip, which negates the terrific recoil of the weapon and allows one person to use it easily and efficiently. Its .50 calibre explosive bullets are capable of blasting their way through most forms of cover or light armour. Due to its bulk a character wearing the REAPER suffers a -1 modifier to their HtH value.

Stun-Nux

Much favoured by the street gangs of the numerous ghettoes of the 21st Century, Stun-Nux are an updated version of the ever popular knuckle-duster. An extremely powerful electric charge is generated by the zircon battery housed in the grip of the Stun-Nux. This is discharged when the Stun-Nux hits a suitable conducting surface (such as human flesh), producing a spectacular and quite deadly effect. Stun-Nux add +2 to a character's HtH value when used.

Smash

Smash is an illegal narcotic drug, which has the effect of greatly increasing the strength of any person who uses it. Originally developed by Carl Halliwell of Sargent-Laroche SA for use as a combat drug, research was stopped when dangerous side-effects proved impossible to prevent. However, a copy of the formula made its way onto the black market, where customers have been found amongst those who are stupid or desperate enough to try it.

Smash can be taken by a character at any time *except* during combat. For the next 5 minutes (place a blank counter on the Time track to remind yourself when the drug wears out) the character adds +3 to their HtH value. On the turn the drug wears off the character suffers one die of wounds.

Cytronic Industrial X-oskeleton®

The X-oskeleton is designed for lifting and carrying heavy objects in confined or inaccessible locations where standard heavy lifting equipment could not be used. Due to its bulk it is not ideal in combat situations, although the wearer's greatly increased strength does mean that any blow which does connect has a shattering effect on the target.

Characters wearing an X-oskeleton receive a +1 bonus to their HtH value in addition to the modifier for one HtH Weapon and may smash through locked doors on an 8 or greater on two dice. However, they suffer a -1 modifier to their reflex value due to the X-oskeleton's bulk. Any character caught in the Electromagnetic Field trap suffers a -2 modifier to their HtH value instead of the +1 modifier until the effects of the trap wear off. The X-oskeleton may not be removed once the character has entered the building.

Chameleon Suit

The G-Tech Chameleon Suit's highly advanced circuitry allows it to mimic the chameleon's natural ability to take on the colour of its surroundings. The very high cost of Chameleon Suits means they are generally only used by special operations units (such as the British SAS, US ASFU and Russian Spetsnaz) where the need for stealth and hidden movement are vital. Any character wearing the suit can act as if they had the 'Hide' skill. If they already have this skill they receive a +1 modifier to the die roll when using the skill.

Temporal Disturbance Detector

Rigged up by scientists investigating the extraordinary phenomenon that is taking place, the Temporal Disturbance Detector(TDD) is capable of registering the disturbance in space time generated by Darkness. Unfortunately its range is very limited, although it will provide some warning of Darkness' approach.

Any character with the TDD will never miss Darkness when moving through secret passages. If the Darkness card is one of those discarded when moving through the passage you may stop and fight. In addition a character with the TDD does *not* need to Test Reflexes to see if they get off a shot with their Laser-Lance.

Holographic Imagizer

The Sony Holographic Imagizer System™ (HIS for short) is based upon fairly standard technology from the HoloVision industry, of which General Electronics' Sony offshoot is a market leader. The HIS produces six perfect images of the character using the device, which usually proves highly disorientating to any attackers. Any character using the HIS may automatically escape from combat *or* receive a +1 modifier to a lucky shot die roll. The HIS may only be used for *one* escape or to affect *one* lucky shot die roll.

Dum-Dum Bullets

Most company's produce explosive bullets for the weapons they produce, although the use of such ammunition is banned by the 1994 United Nations Treaty. Dum-dums can be used with any Gun (not Heavy Weapons or the Laser-Lance) and should be placed next to the gun on the equipment display. If the warrior does not have a gun they may discard this card and choose another. Dum-dums may be used instead of the normal ammunition for the gun, as long as this is declared before the dice are rolled to see if the target is hit, and add +2 to the dice roll. When Dum-dums are used reduce the Uses Left marker on the Dum-dum card instead of the gun card.

WHEN·MAD GODS·LAUGH

A RuneQuest III Adventure by Barry Atkins.

Illustrated by John Blanche

This adventure is designed to be usable in any RuneQuest setting. It is not a Gloranthan adventure, although it is quite compatible with a Gloranthan background. The only basic premise that should be followed is the presence of some Chaotic or Evil Gods whose major wish is to see the world a much less happy place...

Players' Introduction

It is approaching autumn and the adventurers are travelling a grassy plain inhabited by nomad tribes. The biting wind has been whistling across the grasslands in some strange lament for days, and there is a general feeling of unease in the air. The adventurers are met on the trail by a party of nomad tribesmen who look worn and weary. The nomads make no aggressive movements towards the adventurers, but they do 'request' the presence of the characters at a meeting with their chieftain. The nomads do not threaten the adventurers, but they retain the higher ground and outnumber the adventurers by at least two-to-one.

On the journey to the nomads' camp, the tribesmen are polite, but withdrawn and impassive. Direct questions are answered answered with courtesy on all subject but the reason for their chieftain's hospitality. Only one of the nomads shows any emotion: a young warrior who seems to be weeping quietly at the back of the party and constantly looking toward the east. If approached and questioned he sobs openly and, in a shaky voice, implores the characters to hear the 'song of the wind'. After any contact with the adventurers, the youngster is subsequently accompanied by a grizzled older warrior.

The Meeting

The adventurers are met on the outskirts of the nomad camp by the sons of the chieftain (a successful *Human Lore* roll will confirm that this is a great honour), who will recite their lineage ('...the son of Cair Arrowback, son of Joren Wolfbreaker, grandson of Guurem-Who-Laughed...' and so on), and wait politely for the adventurers to introduce themselves. After the necessary formalities have been completed the adventurers will be led into the camp, which is a ramshackle collection of semi-permanent huts and leather tents. The wailing of the tribeswomen, who stand around in small groups, can be heard all around. A roll of Int x 5 reveals the absence of a large proportion of the adolescents who should be present - there are too few children for a tribe of this size. A successful *Animal Lore* roll reveals that the animals of the tribe are sick and underfed.

The adventurers are received at the tent of the chieftain and invited to eat beside him. A couple of the older warriors of the tribe are present, along with the chieftain's sons, representative images of the various tribal gods and a gnarled old woman who is obviously the tribe's shaman.

The chieftain, Braggaza Five-tooth, spends a long time talking of inconsequential matters, such as the adventurers' health and the like, giving them the opportunity to boast of their past exploits to an audience who are prepared to listen. As the wind whips up the tent walls, all of the tribe (except the shaman), glance over to the east and cock their heads to listen to something that the adventurers can't quite hear. A successful *Listen* roll reveals that there is something on the air: a faint, exotic music at the edge of hearing...

The chieftain parries any questions until after everyone has eaten their fill. He sends his sons out of the tent to stand guard and comes to the real reason for his hospitality.

The Speech

Braggaza Five-tooth speaks in a calm, quiet voice filled with authority. He begins his story as a history of the tribe; how they were taught by the gods to care for their beasts; how the beasts agreed that the men of the tribe could eat their meat and use their hides; how when the cold winds came across the grasslands the tribe should hold a great ceremony to release the old and weak beasts from their suffering before the trek to the winter pastures.

But now, continues the chieftain, when the ceremony should be held to guarantee the survival of the tribe, the young warriors and herdsmen have left the tribe. They have gone to follow a demon song first heard 13 sunsets ago... With the children of the tribe gone, there are too few people to perform the ceremony properly and the tribe will perish.

At first the chieftain thought that the youngsters had gone to raid another tribe without his permission, but after several days they found abandoned animals where the herdsmen had left them. Several of the tribe were found and brought back to the camp. All were distressed and raving about a 'song of peace'. Every dawn saw a few young men and women gone - even two of Braggaza's own sons have vanished!

Now the tribe must perform the ceremony and the chieftain and the shaman need every tribesman they can get. They can no longer send out warriors to recover their people. The adventurers must bring back the tribespeople before the ceremony is performed, seven sunsets from today. Braggaza offers them each 20 hides (worth 20-25 pennies each) and the friendship of the tribe.

His solution to the problem of the demon's song taking his people is simple: to stop the song, silence the singer.

Before the adventurers can reply, they are interrupted by one of the chieftain's sons, who enters the tent and whispers in his father's ear. Braggaza looks directly into the adventurers' faces and tells them that another from the tribe has gone to follow the demon's song: the young warrior who was part of the hunting party that met them.

Gamemaster's Introduction

The 'demon song' is being created by a powerful satyr who has turned to the insane paths of Chaos. He is determined to bring only lasting madness upon the world (possibly he was badly treated as a child). Through his magical pipes the satyr is able to affect the emotions of large groups of people, and he has stumbled across a natural rock formation which seems to amplify and channel his powers. He is currently using his pipes to lure people towards him with a song of love and a mystical promise of peace. The young have been more affected by the 'song' than their battle-hardened and cynical elders. As a rule of thumb, the younger a person, the lower the POW they have to resist the wiles of the satyr's pipes.

Once the satyr has gathered enough 'acolytes' he intends to play another song to them, one which will drive them to violence and insanity. He intends to send them out into the world to cause the havoc that he believes will please his evil and chaotic masters. Around him there are already enough who have been converted to protect him from any attack, but the satyr realises that it may not be possible to play his song for much longer without a group of heavily armed tribesmen arriving to investigate...

As the adventurers begin to look for him, he is preparing to perform his last song.

The Satyr's Power

The satyr has a special set of pipes which allow him to control emotion. All those hearing a song of his must make POW roll vs the current magic points of the satyr. As a modifier the character hearing the song may get bonuses relating to how receptive he or she is to the emotion of the song. A hardnosed warrior with a history of mass murder and eating elves for breakfast would get a bonus add to his POW when resisting a sing intended to pacify him. Conversely, his POW rating would be penalised if the song was intended to send him into a berserk battle fury.

The pipes are non-directable, however, and all those hearing the song are affected by the emotional output the satyr is trying to achieve.

Finding the Singer

Fortunately for the adventurers and their search for the source of the 'demon song' they have had a stroke of luck. The young warrior left the camp less than an hour before the adventurers are informed that he has gone. If they leave immediately, they have little difficulty in following his tracks.

The journey across the grasslands should be a difficult pursuit in the darkness, but the adventurers are able to keep up with the warrior. Problems really arise when the adventurers (and any of their mounts) run low on Fatigue Points and the unencumbered nomad is still heading due east. It is easy for the adventurers to guess at the direction of travel from the chieftain's gazes to the east during the meal and the direction of the warrior's trail. At some point the adventurers will have to stop, and when they do so they lose sight of their quarry.

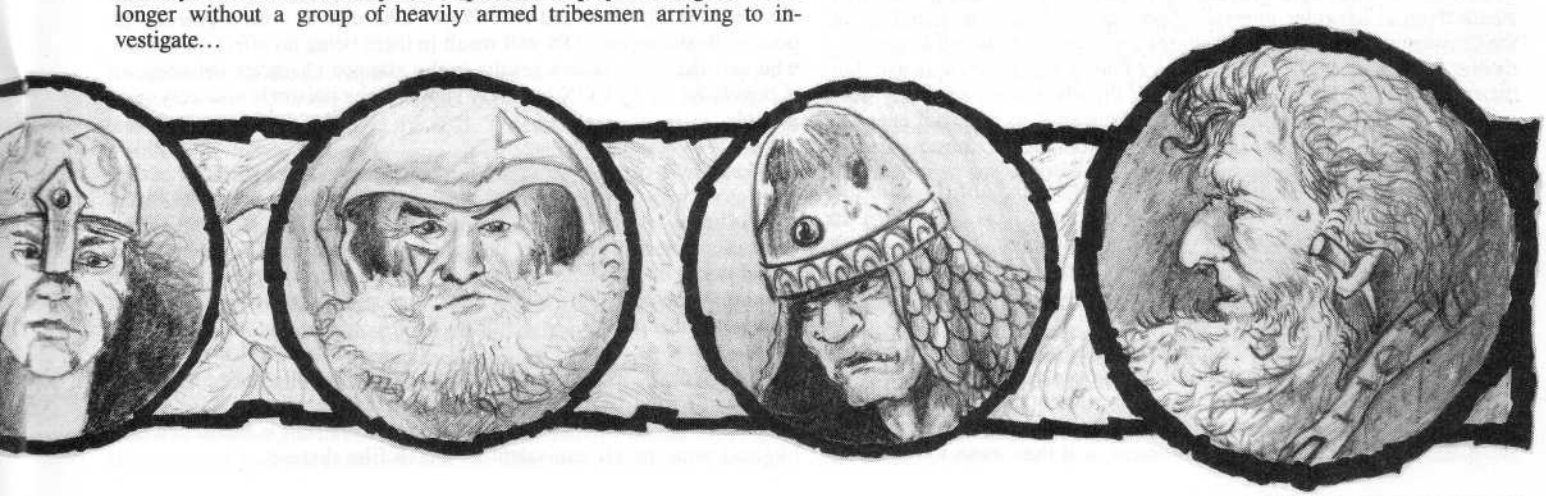
Once they do make camp (or as the evening falls), they hear the satyr's pipes for the first time. Each character must make a roll of POW x 5 or less or be forced to follow the sound - even if they already have negative fatigue points (remember, characters will be unable to move once fatigue points reach a negative total as great as their staring number). Affected characters will keep on moving until they drop from exhaustion. When they do so, affected adventurers will, however, only regain lost fatigue at half the normal rate.

The Hill of Peace

Eventually the adventurers will arrive at the source of the satyr's song. It is up to you to determine how long and difficult their journey was and the nature of any encounters.

Rising from the grasslands ahead of the adventurers is a low mound, its sides blanketed with wild flowers. People are walking on the side of the mound or sitting in little groups amongst the flowers. Everyone is laughing or smiling. If the adventurers think to listen, they can no longer hear the sound of the pipes.

There is an obvious tunnel entrance towards the base of the mound, and the people seem to be entering and leaving it at will.



The Converted

There are a couple of hundred people milling around on the outside of the mound, all doing very convincing impressions of delirious happiness. These are the converts of the satyr, and should be played as peace-loving flower children, fixed grins to the fore, all trying to persuade the adventurers to thrown down their arms and sway to the 'music of love'. Groups of the Converted will approaching the adventurers as soon as they are spotted and follow them about trying, in all sincerity, to show them the joys of peace.

The Converted present problems to the player characters, as they are a group of essentially innocent people who get in the way of their mission. This is a real chance to work on the consciences of the players, as their chances of survival are virtually nil if the characters are followed everywhere by a screaming, laughing mob. Violence, however, will be met with confusion and sympathy for those inflicting it:

- *Forgive them, Brothers and Sisters, for they have not heard the Song of Peace!*
- *Kill me if it will help you find your inner enlightenment, Brother!*
- *Love is all around you, Sister. Put down your Weapons of Hate and Armour of Despair and rejoice with me that we are cleansed! We - Urrghhh-coff-arrghh...*

You see the delights of the situation?

There is also another major problem in that a group of mercenaries has been converted, turned into single-minded death machines by the satyr. The song he used on them was one of hate and war, not of peace, and the adventurers are obvious enemies to their sick and twisted minds. The mercenaries are mingling with the other, peaceful Converted, awaiting an opportunity to strike. They will wait until individual adventurers are covered in flower garlands, off guard and surrounded by young women explaining the need for love. One of the same young women pulling out an axe or dagger from beneath her robes and attempting to (literally) hammer the point home may come as a surprise. Attacks made in this fashion will not be a concerted rush, but individual attempted stabbings and the like.

The adventurers should eventually become fairly paranoid, surrounded as they are by lunatics expressing their desire for love and peace, who attack them at irregular intervals. Spotting the dangerous members of the Converted is difficult, and requires a successful *Scan* roll to spot someone suspicious in the crowd. *Detect Enemy* has an obvious use, but the spell has a fairly short duration and if the adventurers are really worried they are probably regarding all the Converted as potential enemies anyway. Setting off a *Detect Enemy* spell will only add to the adventurers confuse anyway, as the entire mound and the surrounding area lights up like a bonfire!

Any attempt to use *Oratory* will fail - and forcing the massed converts to go back to their respective tribes is difficult unless one of the adventurers had the foresight to bring a couple of clubs and a large waggon.

However, the adventurers immediate dilemma will be solved for them by the satyr as soon as he hears of their presence. He begins to make his preparations to play the song of madness. A low tune will reverberate through the mound itself and the surrounding air. The Converted will stand absolutely motionless for a moment, and then move towards and into the tunnel entrance. The adventurers will be drawn into the tunnels if they fail to make a POW resistance roll vs 16 magic points (the number that the satyr is expending). The flow of people into the tunnels towards the satyr will also tend to carry the adventurers into the caves as well. Moving against this flow is difficult, but (assuming they manage to resist the pipes) standing still is less so.

If the adventurers do climb to the top of the mound they find the source of the sound: an outlet for the air stream which emanates from the fissure in the audience cavern. As the pipes are played the sound is carried into the air stream and amplified, and then carried far from the mound.

If the adventurers are swept into the mound, or have gone there of their own free will, they travel along the corridor to the audience chamber. Here there are hundreds of people sitting and waiting quietly for the satyr to play. Adventurers who have been drawn down here by the pipes can make a second POW roll in an attempt to break free from the influence of the satyr's song. Those free from the song's effects may try to break out of the crowd into one of the side corridors. This requires either a *Luck Roll* (POW x 5) to be at the edge of the crowd or a roll of STR x 5 to barge through the mass.

When the hall is full the satyr stops playing his song that draws his acolytes to the audience. The adventurers have time to act now if they were under his control up to this point. After a few moments, the satyr begins the song of madness and the fun really starts...

The Mound

A. The Entrance Hall - is painted with very simple pictures of flowers and people. It is well lit by groups of torches which line the walls and give off a flickering light. There are no guards here at any time.

B. The Store Room - The valuable goods of all the Converted are stored here, and there are a fair number of good quality furs and occasional pieces of jewellery. The entrance to this treasure trove is constantly guarded by one of the converted ex-mercenaries who wears a 4AP helmet with leather padding that covers his ears. He will not hear a stealthy approach or the song which was meant to draw him to the audience chamber.

C. Food Chamber - There are a dozen cooking fires in here, each with a stew pot. All the food has, however, been doctored by Darkleaf the Elf (see *The Elf Cave* and *Non-Player Characters*) with a Potency 12 poison. Resisting on CON will result in there being no effect on anyone who eats the food; failure results in the affected character behaving as if *Befuddled* for 20-CON hours. A victim of the poison is also very suggestible.

D. The Satyr's Cave - A couple of straw palliasses litter the floor of this cave, along with other evidence of the satyr's life style: half finished haunches of meat, empty kegs of ale and the like. Stuffed into one of the palliasses is best of jewellery brought by the Converted. This includes a gold ring with a *Speedart* matrix, a magical pebble that hums to itself when it is touched (but has no other use) and an assortment of small gems and rings worth 123 pennies.

E. The Elf Cave - This is the home of Darkleaf the Elf, a skilled alchemist who has decided to use his talents in the service of the Chaos Gods. Because of his researches and predilections, his skin is blackened and blighted with the elf equivalent of Dutch Elm disease.

If an adventure enters the cave Darkleaf pretends to be a captive, reduced to his pitiable state by the malice of the satyr. He helps the adventurers in any way, supplying them with torches and offering them food from his pot (which is poisoned as above). The torches are drugged with a herb which will weaken the will of anyone who breathes the smoke (Potency 14 vs CON, and acting as a *Demoralise* spell). In all there are 30 torches stacked in one corner, near a metal brazier which keeps the chamber uncomfortably hot.

Darkleaf has few possessions, and he carries most of these in a belt pouch. He sleeps in a hollow of rock, lined with his cloak. Hidden beneath are small pots of two different salves. One is the concoction he has used to drug the food, the other serves as a protection against the satyr's songs, numbing the hearing of a listener when rubbed into the ears. Normal hearing is not affected.

F. Troll Hole - Gazdorr the cave troll serves the satyr for his own, unknowable reasons. He is certainly not affected by the emotional manipulations of the pipes as he appears to have no emotions. Whatever his reasons, he is a loyal guard for the satyr. At the sound of anyone entering the corridor he will immediately come to investigate.

Gazdorr has few possessions, merely a decorated bronze abacus and a pile of patterned stones. If anyone manages to sneak into his hole, Gazdorr is squatting in the middle of the floor moving the beads backwards and forwards and transferring the stones between various small piles. Despite appearances, Gazdorr is not an average cave troll. He is neither stupid nor gullible, and he will behave as a level-headed professional warrior.

G. Mercenary Quarters - This is where the mercenary converts are normally housed. The chambers is clean and well kept, with 14 beds, lockers, cleaning and mess gear. A thorough search will turn up a few low denomination coins.

H. The Audience Chamber - is huge, with many entrances from the corridor which leads to the food hall. On one wall there is a ledge some 80 feet above the floor. It is from here that the satyr plays his pipes, the sound being carried up and out of the mound by the air from a fissure in the floor through a gap in the ceiling. The air stream will deflect any missile weapons in an unpredictable manner (-70% chance to hit a target on the ledge).

It is possible for the adventures to climb up the wall to the ledge. A successful *Jump* roll is needed to cross the fissure, followed by a roll of less than DEX x 5 to cling to the wall. Three *Climb* rolls are necessary to reach the ledge, and every time an adventurer attempts to move up the wall a roll of STR x 5 or less must also be made. If the STR roll is failed the character will be blown from the wall by a particularly powerful blast, and will fall down the fissure, taking 6D6 damage on arrival at the bottom of the fissure.

When the satyr begins to play the whole hall will act as a huge amplifier. This time his song is neither pleasant nor easy to listen to, but his audience will still be held in thrall by the sound - a high pitched, howling giggle of malicious madness, the sound of an insane gods laughter at the world. His song of madness will take only 15 minutes to wreck the brains of all who are in the hall. Those affected will immediately lose all pretence of love and peace and become filled with hatred and bloodlust.

If the satyr gets this far, the hall will empty as the Converted sweep out of the chamber and scatter to the four winds with murder and mayhem the only things on their minds...

The adventurers should be allowed to resist the effects of the song of madness in exactly the same way as for any other song. Characters who are elsewhere in the caverns are mildly affected by the madness, with bonuses to POW when resisting the song and/or a limited duration to the homicidal mania. The song is aimed very specifically at the audience in the hall who are already susceptible and has less effect without the mass togetherness of the Converted.

The Final Showdown

The battle with the satyr on the ledge above the audience chamber is the dramatic climax to this adventure. The satyr does not have time to use his pipes to influence the adventurers, but he can engage in hand-to-hand combat. His favoured tactic is to head butt an opponent, hoping for a knockback off the wall into the fissure below.

There is little space on the ledge for a running fight, although one adventurer will certainly be able to stand on the ledge and fight the satyr. If a second adventurer tries to enter the fight a successful DEX x 5 roll is required each combat round (at SR 10) to avoid falling. There is no room for the third adventurer.

The Converted will be too lost in the satyr's song and its effects to interfere with any adventurers climbing up to the ledge or a fight. Only when the satyr is dead will they react in any way.

Now the Show is Over...

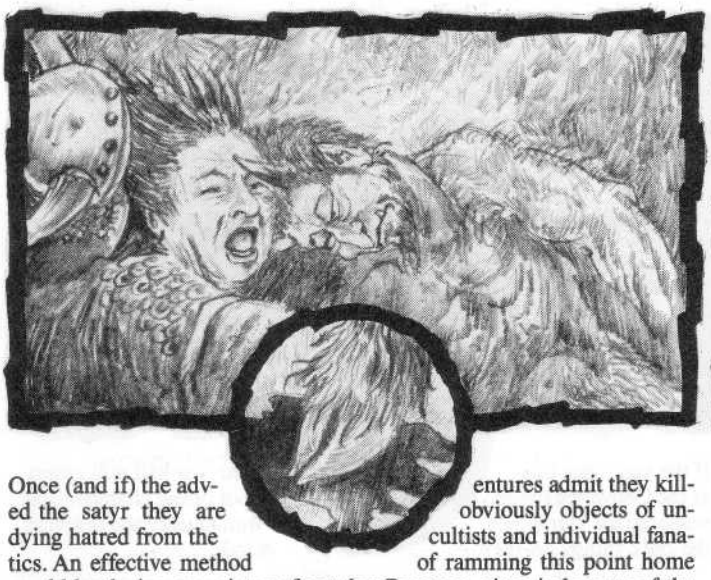
Happy that they have completed their mission, the adventurers may be rather surprised at the reaction of the stunned converts. The initial reaction is one of absolute silence, and then bedlam breaks loose. Many of them cry and tear their hair at the sight of their 'messiah' being slaughtered. The ex-mercenaries will all charge towards the entrance to the ledge aiming to tear the adventurers into very small pieces. The adventurers will be happy to know that they are now cornered on the ledge with a very long drop behind them.

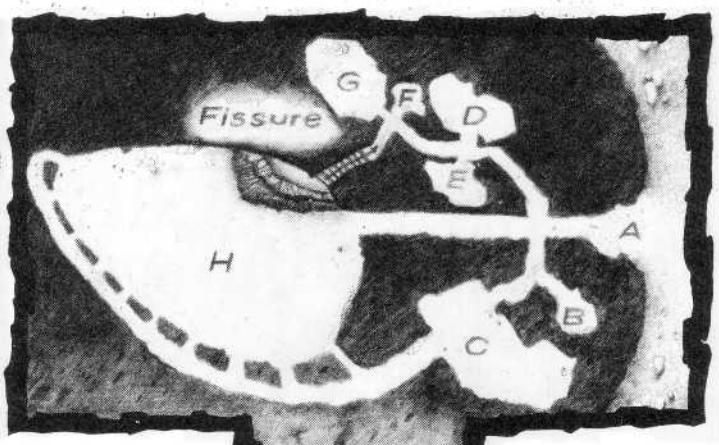
If they move quickly the adventurers should be allowed to escape from their certain deaths in the confusion that follows. The hall is not particularly well-lit, and characters with a bit of wit can try to fade into the crowd and hope that they are not recognised as messiah-killers. They won't be in the hysteria, but they needn't know that... Staying to fight it out with the mercenaries is singularly ill-advised.

What Now?

Once the initial shock and hysteria has died away, the satyr's converts will begin drifting away to their homes. At this point, the adventurers are (relatively) safe in admitting their part in the affair. The break-up of the community takes several days, and the adventurers may be in a position to collect the nomads and return them to their camp in time for the ceremony.

Some of the Converted are, not surprisingly, scarred for life by their experiences, holding on with grim determination to the dreams of love and peace that the satyr gave them. If this adventure is used as part of a continuing campaign some of the survivors form a small cult which preaches peace on earth and universal love - a dangerous occupation in most roleplaying worlds.





Once (and if) the adventures admit they killed the satyr they are obviously objects of undying hatred from the cultists and individual fanatics. An effective method of ramming this point home would be during any victory feast that Braggaza gives in honour of the adventurers, as rescued nomads turn their backs on their rescuers.

Finally, if the players failed to stop the satyr's song of madness there is the minor problem of a couple of hundred murderous religious fanatics on the loose...

Notes on Play

There are deliberately no distances mentioned in the text of the adventure. *When Mad Gods Laugh* works best when run the players believe that they are up against a deadline. There is little real point in having the adventurers arrive *after* the satyr has finished turning his followers into mindless psychopaths. The climax to the adventure is an accompaniment to the steady rise of the satyr's song of madness. Ideally the adventurers should get to the ledge as the last notes are being played.

Non-Player Characters

Converted Mercenary

Characteristics
STR **14** CON **15** SIZ **14** INT **11** POW **12** DEX **13** APP **12**
Attributes
Move **3** Hit Points **15** Fatigue **23** Magic Points **12** DEX SR **3**
AP/HP
R Leg **4/5** L Leg **4/5** Abdomen **4/5** Chest **4/6** R Arm **4/4**
L Arm **4/4** Head **4/5**
Weaponry
Shortsword SR **7** Attack **58** Damage **1D6+1+1D4**
Parry **35** AP **10**
Dagger SR **8** Attack **62** Damage **1D4+2+1D4** Parry **29**
AP **6**
Skills
Dodge 34, Hide 62, Sneak 52, Gibber Insanely 76, Scan 67
Spells
Spirit Magic 59; Heal 3, Protection 1, Bladesharp 1
Notes
Each mercenary wears cuirboilli and padding under thick woollen robes; weaponry is also kept hidden under robes. No set number of mercenaries is specified in the adventure. Use the above statistics as the pacing of the adventure demands.

Average Convert
The average convert should be regarded as spare NPC/cannon-fodder with low POW and possibly CON for dramatic effect. They will not fight, or even dodge a blow.

Darkleaf the Elf
Characteristics
STR **9** CON **10** SIZ **12** INT **21** POW **16** DEX **16** APP **3**
Attributes
Move **2** Hit Pts **11** Fatigue **15** Magic Pts **16**
DEX SR **2**
AP/HP
R Leg **1/4** L Leg **1/4** Abdomen **1/4** Chest **1/5** R Arm **1/3**
L Arm **1/3** Head **1/4**
Weaponry
Torch (2H club) SR **3** Attack **45** Damage **1D6+1(+1D4 if lit)** Parry **38** AP **5**
Skills
Dodge 12, Mineral Lore 87, Plant Lore 67, Brew Poison 98, Fast Talk 67
Notes
Darkleaf wears 1AP leather armour. In his belt pouch he carries a small bronze idol worth 213 pennies, a salve to hold his rotting flesh together and 42 pennies.

Gazdorr the Cave Troll
Characteristics
STR **24** CON **14** SIZ **26** INT **15** POW **12** DEX **10** APP **4**
Attributes
Move **3** Hit Points **20** Fatigue **36** Magic Points **12** DEX SR **3**
AP/HP
R Leg **3/7** L Leg **3/7** Abdomen **3/7** Chest **3/9** R Arm **3/6**
L Arm **3/6** Head **3/7**
Weaponry
War Maul SR **4** Attack **54** Damage **1D10+2+2D6**
Parry - AP **12**
Claw SR **7** Attack **67** Damage **1D6+2D6** Parry - AP **As L Arm**
Spells
Spirit Magic 57; Bludgeon 2, Heal 2, Detect Enemy
Notes
Regenerates 1 HP per location per round. 3 AP skin.

The Satyr
Characteristics
STR **21** CON **14** SIZ **25** INT **17** POW **19** DEX **15** APP **12**
Attributes
Move **5 Hit Points 20** Fatigue **35**
Magic Points **19+25=44** DEX SR **3**
AP/HP
R Leg **6/7** L Leg **6/7** Abdomen **6/7** Chest **4/9** R Arm **4/6**
L Arm **4/6** Head **6/7**
Weaponry
Head Butt SR **6** Attack **65** Damage **1D6**
Parry - AP **As Head**
Skills
Dodge 39
Notes
The satyr's 3AP skin and increased SIZ are chaotic features.
Magic
The emotion controlling pipes are only usable (to effect) by a satyr. However, each time they are played there is a cumulative 2% chance that they will bestow a Chaotic feature on their player!

CROOKED CONKERERS Y METAL

The Broken Nose Tribal Army List

by Richard Halliwell & Rick Priestley

*This article is based on the army lists given in **Ravening Hordes** - the latest Warhammer publication. Because of the unique history of the Broken Nose tribe, their army is not typical of goblin forces. The army described below is intended for friendly games not the Warhammer League.*

Boggrub Legbiter squats beneath a withered shrub on a high peak overlooking the western mouth of the Blackfire Pass. He is gnawing on the leg bone of some creature which had better remain un-named, with him is Gutbug, his faithful lieutenant. Gutbug is concentrating on removing an obstruction from his left nostril, Boggrub is staring at the landscape spread out below like a picnic. With an expression bordering on the thoughtful he scans the lush, rolling plains of eastern Averland. His tribe, the Broken Nose goblins, have spent years battling through the Worlds Edge Mountains to reach this point. Since they captured Skull Crusher and Lead Belcher, two dwarven engines of war, nothing has stood in their way. Now the tribe is encamped in the pass ready for their most ambitious stunt to date - an expedition into the fringes of The Empire.

Boggrub surveys the lush pastures and the tiny little villages dotted

Fig.1

Fig.2

Fig.3

Fig.4

across the plains and disappearing into the distance. 'Easy pickings' he mutters, half to himself.

Gutbug extracts his index finger from up his nose, flexes it and looks at its tip 'I fort it wuz hard work meself. Worrr, biggest one I've ever 'ad though.'

'Not yer nose, that lot, there.'

Gutbug looks up at the landscape, frowning because he's not noticed it yet. He nods his agreement but, 'Ang about, wot thiels vat?'

They both squint at the cloud of dust and the shapes moving around in it, Boggrub is the first to venture an opinion. 'Urr, stunties, 'undreds of 'em.'

Gutbug peers at the scurrying figures, his forehead creases as he tries to count them. This exercise proves a little too much and he loses track somewhere around 12, and there are still scores more emerging from behind a bend in the chasm. Slowly they begin to form up into regiments, blocking the pass. The two goblins watch as, with dwarven precision and organisation, tents are pitched and stockades built. 'Bludiek boss, they musta known we wus comin'. We'll never get past wivout an army'.

Boggrub pauses for thought, a small thought but quite a long pause.. 'Mmm, y'right...an *army*...Badbreath's boys're still sumwhere ound 'ere, they'll probably be munching them stunties we bashed a way back up the pass. N'then there's Spinnin' Spat, and 'is loonies...'

'Yer, an' we could go find ve Kill Yoo Crew, n givvum sum money.'

'An' Toerag's littl'uns, I saw some snotling does a bit back, that'll be them I bet' squawks Boggrub with mounting excitement, 'an some o' Wolfy's lot, be no problem. Well wot yer waitin for?'

Gutbug looks confused, 'Wot?'

'Wot yer waiting for?' repeats Boggrub, smacking Gotrub round the head with the leg bone by way of punctuation 'Wot, you, waitin', for? Go, an', gettem.'

SPECIAL RULES

The profiles and rules for the various troops can be found in Warhammer Battle. The rules below are for types not included in the main set:

GOBLIN FANATICS

The goblin fanatics are drug-crazed followers of a particularly nasty goblin cult. The fanatics use the legendary goblin ball and chain; this a purely fantasy weapon - not the ordinary inoffensive morning star type of thing used by medieval knights, but a huge solid metal ball suspended on a chain several feet long. Only a creature with absolutely no regard for the dangers of a slipped disc would even look at such a thing!

Desensitised and thoroughly blitzed on a strange herbal preparation, these revered fanatics hide themselves amongst the ranks of ordinary goblin

Fig.5

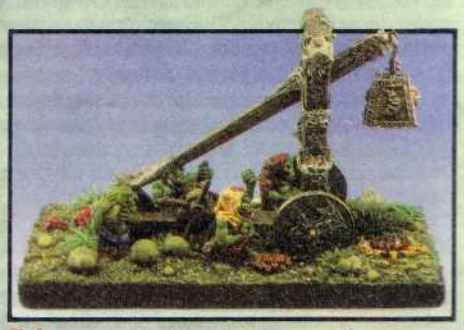


Fig.6

Fig.7

Fig.8

Fig.1 *Lead Belcher.*
Fig.2 *Skullcrusher with its Guard of Honour.*
Fig.3 *The Fanatics Nuff said!*
Fig.4 *Here, we go here we go here we go:*
Fig.5 *Goblins, Trolls & Orcs a family photograph.*

Fig.6 *Skullcrusher.*
Fig.7 *The Orc Boar Riders.*
Fig.8 *Skullcrusher in action.*
Fig.9 *Wolf Riders & Goblins to the Attack.*

Fig.9

units. Gibbering squeaky little incantations through foaming lips, they are herded into battle by those around them, their green-glowing staring mad and unseeing. Once within a reasonable distance of an enemy regiment, the crazed goblins are pushed into the fray by their comrades (with some relief one imagines!) and they immediately begin to spin uncontrollably under the influence of narcotics and religious fervour. What happens next is in the lap of the gods. With no knowledge of what's happening around them the whirling goblin fanatics plough through anything in their way, friend and foe alike. Eventually the narcotics wear off and the acolyte collapses in a state of exhaustion, or his heart fails under the strain and gives out altogether. Many of these warriors die as they stumble into trees or holes in the ground, their weapons then become a liability as the chains become entangled in trees or swing round and decapitate the user.

A model equipped with this weapon is mounted on a circular card base 1" in radius. Because the goblin fanatic is initially hidden amongst its fellows it is not placed on the table until ready for use. The player must write down how many fanatics are present in a unit of ordinary goblins, these are represented by normal goblin models until they attack.

As soon as the sheltering unit comes with 8" of an enemy the fanatics must be released towards their foe. This happens automatically no matter which side's turn it is, and irrespective of the normal turn sequence. Each fanatic model is pointed in a direction determined by the controlling player and moves off in this direction a distance of 2D6". Any unit in the way of the fanatic is moved over and suffers D6 automatic *strength* 5 hits with no saving throw for armour. The fanatic's path and the damage it causes is worked out immediately. Opponents may never fight back against a fanatic - they're far too busy trying to get out of the way!

Once it has made its initial out of sequence move the fanatic model is subsequently moved at the beginning of that side's movement. However, the goblin has now lost all sense of direction, so direction and move distance become random. This is dangerous for anyone close by! For each fanatic model nominate one direction as 12 o'clock and roll a D12. The direction the model moves corresponds to the numbers around a clock. It moves 2D6" and crosses over all units in its path doing damage as above.

Any model rolling a double for movement in any turn following its initial move is removed as a casualty of its own weapon - either a victim of heart failure or the inability to control the whirling ball. Any fanatic model moving into a building, wooded area or over an obstacle is automatically removed.

SNOTLINGS

Snotling are grouped together on a single base in 3 ranks of 3 making a total 9 models per base. In combat each base makes 3 *attacks* and can withstand 9 *wounds*. Record casualties for the entire regiment, when this reaches 9 wounds remove one base. No deduction in fighting power is experienced due to loss of wounds until an entire base is removed.

Snotlings never charge or receive charges unless they outnumber their enemy by at least three to one. If a regiment of snotlings is charged by a unit which it doesn't outnumber by three to one, it must run away. Thus a regiment of 6 snotling bases (54 models) would run away if it were charged by 19 or more humans, but could receive the charge if there were only 18 men. For multi-wound creatures such as ogres and giants, use the same ratio but count their number of wounds. Thus the 6-base snotling regiment would run away if charged by 7 or more ogres (21 wounds). Snotlings used as skirmishers must run away from other skirmishers unless they outnumber their opponents by 3 to 1 or more.

Snotling 9-model base - 50 points

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Int	Cl	WP
4	2	2	1	1	9	3	3	4	4	4	4

PUFFBALLS

Puffballs are a weapon used exclusively by the snotlings. If a regiment of snotlings is equipped with puffballs is it assumed that each base contains models carrying sufficient puffballs for an unlimited number of shots.

Puffballs are effective only against ordinary living creatures. They don't harm things like skeletons, demons, zombies or ghouls. They are used like ordinary thrown missiles. Each base may shoot *once* per turn, regardless of the number of figures equipped with puffballs. Roll to hit as normal, but treat misses as 'duds' which haven't exploded.

When a puffball scores a hit, place a 2" diameter template over the target model. Models whose bases are even partially within a puffball's zone of effect must test by rolling D6 and comparing it to their *toughness*. If the dice score equal to or less than the *toughness* rating, the tester isn't affected by the spores. Those who fail the test, by scoring more than their *toughness*, lose 1 point form all their characteristics for the duration of the battle, although they are then immune to further such attacks.

WOLF RIDERS

Goblins rarely use conventional horses as mounts, they prefer the bestial savagery of trained wolves. A goblin riding a wolf has his fighting prowess increased by the animal's own attack. This is a *bite* attack may be delivered only towards the front. When using wolf riders remember that their armour saving throw is increased by 1 for being mounted.

Wolf - basic points 2¾, 7¾ when used as a mount

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Int	Cl	WP
9	4	0	3	3	1	3	1	3	4	4	4

All leadership and psychology tests are taken on the rider's characteristics, not the mount's. Close combat and missile fire attacks are always taken against the rider. Riderless animals are removed from play.

WAR ENGINES

Both of the war engines detailed below are subject to the following rules:

Movement: The engines are fitted with wheels and can be pushed by their crew. Speed equals ½ per crewman pushing, up to a maximum of 3". Engines never reserve move and cannot cross obstacles or difficult ground, nor may they be deployed on difficult ground.

Fire Arcs: The engines may only engage targets within an arc 22½ degrees either side of straight ahead.

Attacking the Engine: The engine has the *toughness* and *wounds* given on its profile. It may only be attacked in hand-to-hand combat once all the crew have been killed. The engine can be shot at, counting as a large target, but most weapons will lack the strength to damage it. The crew count the engine as soft cover if it is they, rather than the machine, who are being shot at.

SKULL CRUSHER

Skull Crusher is a dwarf trebuchet which was captured by the tribe at the Battle of Karak-Azul. It uses the normal rules given for stone-throwers, except that the hit procedure is slightly different and the weapon magically ignites its ammunition, turning a conventional stone into a ball of fire.

The shooter nominates the target point as usual but rolls to hit on the standard chart on page 19 of the Combat volume. Use Skull Crusher's *bow skill* of 5 and ignore cover modifiers unless the target is in woods or built up areas. Count shots at 30-48" as long range. If the shot misses use a D12 'clockface roll' for the direction of deviation, and a D6" for the extent of deviation.

Models whose bases lie even partially within the 2" diameter *effect template* suffer the normal D3 *strength* 6 hits, plus an additional D6 points of fire damage.

Skull Crusher - 150 points

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Int	Cl	WP
*	0	5	6	6	8	0	0	As Crew			

* ½" per crewman pushing, up to a maximum of 3"

LEAD BELCHER

Lead Belcher is another of the tribe's acquisitions from the dwarfs. Lead Belcher is an organ gun, comprising three small bombards and one howitzer. In any turn the crew can fire either the small bombard or the howitzer, but never both.

The lower three guns operate as bombards, according to the Warhammer rules (p 51, Warhammer, Vol 1). They fire together, and only have a single 2" fire corridor, but any target within this area takes D3 *strength* 6 hits. They may not fire independently or at separate targets.

The upper gun is treated as a stone-thrower, lobbing a ball in a high arc with a maximum range of 48" and a minimum range of 18". It may not be aimed independently of the lower guns, but can fire separately. Otherwise, it operates exactly as if it were a stone-thrower.

The whole machine has a minimum crew of 3. Its profile is as follows:

Lead Belcher - 175 points

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Int	Cl	WP
*	0	3	6	6	8	0	0	As Crew			

* ½" per crewman pushing, up to a maximum of 3"

The organ gun starts the game with both the bombards and the howitzer already loaded. A separate record should be kept of the status of each of these, as they must be reloaded after every shot. Reloading takes place

in the move phase. If the gun is repositioned or moved it cannot be reloaded. Reload depending time on the number of crewmen present:

	Reloading Time	
Crew	Howitzer	Bombards
5	1	2
4	2	4
3	3	6
2	4	8
1	5	10

Note that the time given to reload the bombards is for all three; they may not be only partially reloaded.

ARMY LIST

The list below is for armies of between 1500 and 2000 points, slightly smaller than those given in ***Ravening Hordes***. The player is free to chose the troops within the limits maximum and minimum limits given. The character models must be included in the army.

Broken Nose Goblins

Broken Nose regiments of at least 20 models may be given a regimental *standard bearer*, regiments of 30 or more may be have a *musician*. Musicians and standard bearers cost double the points of a basic trooper.

Bogrub Legbiter, goblin major hero and *army commander*. Bogrub is armed with a sword, wears chainmail armour and carries a shield. He costs 87 points.

Gutbug, goblin minor hero. Gutbug is armed with a sword, wears chainmail armour and carries a shield. 27 points.

Stink, Ratbrain and Pussboil, goblin champions. Basic points cost for an unarmoured model with a sword or other hand weapon is 4¼ points.

Additional cost to give champions spears *or* short bows: ½ point each.

Extra cost for a shield: ½ a point per model.

Extra for a metal breastplate or chainmail armour: ½ point each.

Juju Rutting goblin shaman. Juju is a level 2 magician, because of his relatively low intelligence Juju knows a maximum of 6 spells, these may be chosen before a battle commences and cost 10 points each. Juju is unarmoured, carries a dagger and costs 100 points.

25-100 Broken Nose Warriors in regiments of 25 or more. The warriors are goblins armed with hand weapons. Each one costs 2¼ points.

Up to 50% of the warriors present may be armed with spears. This costs ¼ point per model.

Additional cost to equip up to 50% of the warriors present with shields: ¼ point per model.

Up to 25% of the warriors present may be given chainmail armour: ½ point per model.

50-150 Broken Nose Archers in regiments of 25 or more. They are armed with knives and short bows, and each model costs 2½ points.

Up to 50% of the archers being used may be given chainmail armour at a cost of ½ a point per model.

Skull Crusher acting independently with a crew of four unarmoured goblins with hand weapons. The basic model costs 159 points.

Skull Crusher may have up to eight extra crew at 2¼ points each.

Lead Belcher acting independently with a crew of four unarmoured goblins. The basic model costs 164 points.

Extra crew (up to 8) for lead belcher cost 2¼ points.

Spinning Spat's Whirling Loonies

Goblin fanatics are covered in the rules above. The player must write down which regiments the fanatics are hiding in at the start of the battle. To hide them properly there must be at least nine ordinary troopers for each fanatic.

0-8 Goblin Fanatics hidden in amongst the Broken Nose goblin regiments. The fanatics are armed with the special ball and chain weapon. They cost 30 points per model.

Badbreath's Beaters

The Beaters are simple, every day, troll folk. They'll go along with Boggrub's army for the chance of a decent meal. The very notion of a standard or musician is totally incomprehensible to them.

0-6 TROLLS in a single regiment. The trolls are unarmoured and carry clubs (hand weapons). They cost 66 points each.

Titchy Toerag's Ankle Slashers

Titchy Toerag's lads are snotlings. Snotling regiments are generally too stupid to use regimental standard bearers or musicians.

0-15 Snotling Bases, in regiments of 5 or more bases. The snotlings are armed with hand weapons. Each base costs 50 points.

Additional cost to equip a snotling base with puffballs: 5 points each.

Wolfy Wolfgang's Wolf Rider Gang

Wolf Rider regiments of at least 10 models may be given a regimental *standard bearer*, regiments of 15 or more may be have a *musician*. Musicians and standard bearers cost twice as much as a basic trooper.

Wolfy Wolfgang, goblin minor hero. Wolfy rides wolfback, carries a shield and a sword and costs 36 points.

0-40 Wolf Riders in regiments of 10 or more. Each rider is an unarmoured goblin carrying hand weapons and a shield. They cost 10¼ points each.

Extra cost to equip the riders with either a spear or a short bow: ¼ point per model.

Extra to equip the riders with chainmail armour: ½ point per model.

The Kill You Crew

The Kill You Crew are hobgoblin mercenaries. Regiments of 15 or more may have a *standard bearer*, those of 20 or more may have a *musician*. Musicians/standard bearers cost twice as much as a basic model.

Slitter Skdansk hobgoblin champion. Slitter is armed with a sword, wears chainmail armour and carries a shield. He costs 8½ points.

0-30 Hobgoblin Warriors in regiments of 10 or more. The warriors are armed with swords and carry hand weapons. Each model costs 5½ points.

Additional cost to give the warriors spears: ½ point per model.

Additional cost to arm up to 10 warriors with double-handed axes or swords: 1 point per model.

Additional cost to arm any of the warriors with metal breastplate or chainmail armour: 1 point per model.

0-20 Hobgoblin Archers in regiments of 10 or more. They are armed with hand weapons and bows and each model costs 5½ points.

Additional cost to equip the archers with chainmail armour: 1 point per model.

Skirmishers

0-100 Skirmishers chosen from existing regiments. Using troops as skirmishers is free but they must obey the special rules (p43, Warhammer Vol 1). The only troops which may be selected as skirmishers are goblin and archers, snotlings and wolf riders.

TACTICS

A goblin's *weapon skill* is quite low but his *bow skill* is perfectly acceptable. While it seems like a good idea to buy lots of goblin archers and shoot the enemy to death, this won't work because of inter-goblinoid animosity. This army is such that it has to be brought up to close quarters very quickly. However, large regiments of bowmen can provide invaluable supporting fire and pick off some of the enemy's crack troops before they can be brought to bear. Such regiments should either be used as skirmishers are stationed in isolated vantage points such as hills or high buildings.

The same can be said of the two engines - Skull Crusher and Lead Belcher, both should concentrate fire on the best troops in the other side's ranks. Lead Belcher is particularly nasty because of its devastating effect when fired into a regiment's flank. The threat of this happening can be used to constrict the enemy's movements and ability to manoeuvre. Players will probably find that Lead Belcher is more useful when deployed on the army's flanks, rather than in the centre. Remember to station a small regiment of goblins close to the engines to protect them from enemy charges.

The wolf riders are strong melee troops but will be wasted if they are simply sent against the enemy centre. Their mobility allows them to threaten to outflank and encircle the enemy. The threat of being outflanked may force the opposing player to waste troops in futile chases after the wolf riders. If the riders do manage to get behind the enemy they can either harass them with bowfire, tie up reserves or charge in simultaneously with frontal attacks.

The hobgoblins and trolls have some pretty strange habits but they are the best shock troops in the army. They should be at the focal point of any onslaught on the opposing ranks. They should not however be committed against opponents who will easily beat them. the enemy's best troops should be tied down either by threats from the wolf riders, by skirmishers or, as a last resort, by attacks from goblin regiments. Goblin regiments attacking the enemy elite will almost certainly get hacked to shreds, but the melee and the subsequent pursuit and rallying will win valuable time.

Good luck!

THE DARK BROTHERHOOD II

'Looking for me?'

The mocking voice echoed around the Market Square of Nottingham. Gisburn cursed - the figure in Lincoln green was already outside the castle. Bellowing an order, he sent the Norman troops charging out of the gate, plunging into screaming, bellowing, clucking chaos.

Behind him, the now-solitary guard on the dungeon gate choked unnoticed in the huge grasp of Little John, the Hood's chief enforcer. Soon, the two below would have their heads clashed together, and John would free Scarlett the Swordmaster, Alan-a-dale the Musicmaster, Marion the Seductress, and Nasir the Poisoner. Once more, the cream of the Assassins' Guild had escaped the Sheriff's justice...

Anyone converting Robin Hood and his Merry Men to AD&D automatically assumes that they are Rangers - after all, they wear green, live in the forest, and they're good guys. They must be Rangers. Except for Alan-a-Dale, of course, who must be a Bard because he uses a musical instrument, and since the TV series introduced Nasir, he must be accounted for as well. Not a Ranger, certainly, since he wears black and comes from a land where there aren't any forests. OK, Rangers don't need forests, or to wear green - the point is exaggerated. Nasir was an Assassin in the pilot, but now he's a good guy, he can't be that any more; maybe he changed class as well as alignment...

AD&D (or even Real Life) isn't necessarily that clearly-divided. There's nothing in the rule books which state that Assassins can't wear green, live in forests, and engage in the redistribution of wealth. 'Rob from the rich and give to the poor'? It's only logical: you have to rob the rich because they're the only ones with any money, and you have to pay the peasants for the food they grow or they get nasty, the woodsmen tell the Sheriff where your camp is, or you find yourselves facing the Magnificent Seven. Likewise, you must pay your informants, tavern bills, and so on: all poor people!

The Nature of Assassins

The taditional picture of an assassin is of an ugly little man, dressed in black, lurking in an alleyway with a poisoned dagger and huge psychological problems. Roleplaying is, however, no longer about cardboard-cutout stereotypes. All sorts of characters should be looked at as individuals, and each class examined to see what can be made of their abilities. This article started with the idea of Robin Hood as an assassin for its shock value. As you look at it, though, the idea becomes less ridiculous; apart from the fact that their alignment is unquestionably Good, there is no reason why the Merry Men can't be assassins. Consider the amount of time they spend sneaking around the shadows of Nottingham Castle and getting into locked rooms containing taxes, as well as taking sentries out with a single blow. To peasants, a group of assassins opposing an oppressive group of barons and living it up on the proceeds will look like heroes. Since the assassins will be doing their best to ensure that the peasants continue to think that, the tales of the group will reflect the fact. Surely under the present rule that assassins must be evil, they should be much nastier?

'The Dark Brotherhood' (WD48) proposed that assassins should not be restricted to Evil alignments. Although 'Killing for profit... is the antithesis of weal' (killing for the fun of it fills that bill), there are few GMs around who run their games by that theory - many Neutrals raid non-human settlements not to rescue missing humans, or for some similar reason, but purely for the money. Mercenary soliders kill when called upon to do so purely for the cash. Is killing a known target for a fixed fee any worse? According to the Assassins' Guild, it's less so: if someone wants an enemy dead strongly enough to hire a professional for the task there, must be something unpleasant about the target, while even blamelessly good people get killed in wars. Thus, Assassins may be either Neutral or Evil.

This brings up the first major change of attitude to assassins. By definition, assassins kill people for money. However, membership of the Assassins' Guild no more demands that you kill people for money than working for MI6 demands that you frequent Monte Carlo casinos armed with a PPK. Any organisation solely devoted to killing people will be seen as a major problem, infiltrated and eliminated by the Secret Police. For their own safety, the Guild must become indispensible to the ruling class of their land. Often, this means that they *are* the Secret Police, but whatever their cover or usefulness to the Establishment, they will arrange things in much the same way. Murder contracts are few and far between, and an organisation cannot be run on such slim pickings. Instead, the Guilds are based on their information-gathering organisation, an expansive (and expensive) network of informers, spies, and gossipmongers.

Thieving Abilities

Although not based on a criminal organisation, the Assassins' Guild lives by criminal means. Burglary is an excellent method of acquiring information, so all Guild members are well-drilled in the essential skills: moving silently, hiding in shadows, climbing walls, and picking locks. Less commonly, interesting facts can be overheard by a carefully placed ear (hear noise) or papers can even be stolen in the streets (pickpocketing). Sounds like a familiar list of skills?

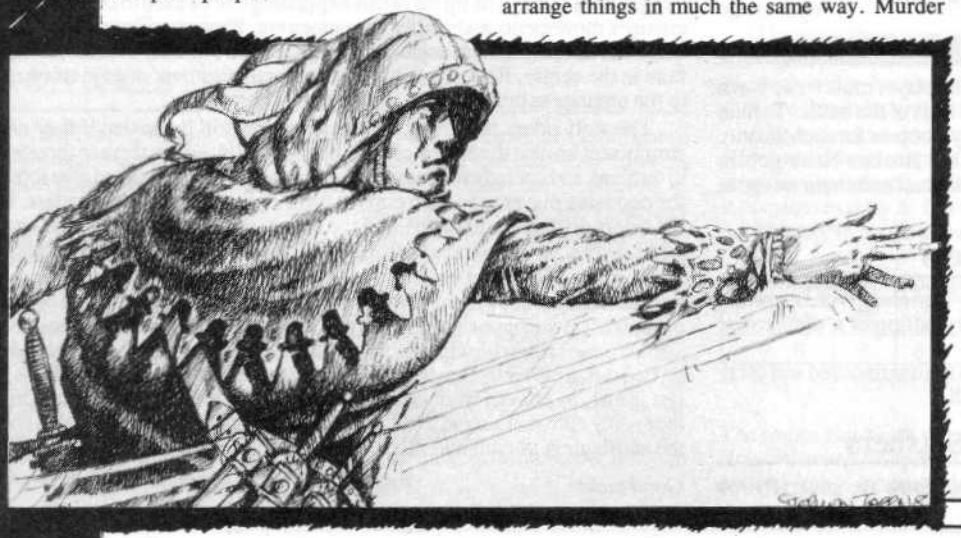
Since they all receive training in these skills, Assassins can keep their professional skills sharp while making quick profits from crime. Usually, they favour burglary and confidence tricks, the crimes nearest their 'real' profession. Because of this different emphasis in their training, assassins are better at some thieving skills than a true thief, and worse at others. The ability of an assassin (and from here onwards I use the term to refer to the Guild's elite agents, the character class, whether PC or NPC, rather than the other thieves, informers, spies, bodyguards and so on who happen to be members of the Guild) to *move silently, hide in shadows, climb walls,* and *read languages* is the same as that of a thief two levels senior to the assassin, finding and removing traps is at the same chance as that of one two levels his junior, and picking pockets as one three levels lower. Only in their chances to open locks and hear noise are thieves and assassins equal. Adjust your Thief Functions Table in the following way:

'Level' of Thief	Pick Pockets	Open Locks	Find/Remove Traps	Move Silently
−2	15%			
−1	20%		10%	
0	25%		15%	
1	30%	25%	20%	15%
etc.				
ASSASSIN MODIFIERS:−3 (Levels)		Same	−2	+2

The Read Languages ability of thieves is further expanded. At first level assassin, the chance is 15%, and the chance is the same to Comprehend Languages. If the Assassin makes his roll, he will understand the gist of what is being said in a language he doesn't know through his understanding of body language and comparative linguistics (now you know why they need above-average intelligence!). Obviously, the language must be one which the Assassin could reasonably expect to understand - fire giants aren't that different to humans and can be understood, but what a leader is saying to his wolf-pack, or indeed a gnome to a rabbit, involve totally different body language and semantic conventions. There are modifiers to this ability:

Intelligence:	*11*	*12*	*13*	*14*
Modifier:	−10%	−5%	0	0

Race:	*Dwarf*	*Elf*	*Gnome*
Modifier:	−5%	+10%	+5%



ILLUSTRATED BY STEPHEN TAPPIN

If you use alignment tongues they can be understood with a Comprehend Languages roll, as will highly technical jargon. The ability does not allow the assassin to speak the understood language.

Violence

As well as the criminal arts, assassins must learn the use of violence. As previously noted, although it is called the Assassins' Guild, assassination fees are rare but the diligent operative must always be prepared to take one on. Besides this, violent death is always a possibility in their other activities, and they must be trained in the skills required so that they can hand it out rather than meet it.

Initially, they are trained with three weapon skills. Usually, one of these will be Dagger or perhaps Brawling (which covers the use of all unorthodox weapons: beer-mugs, chairs, hobbits, and so on), but there are two skills not usually found elsewhere:

Garotte: Requires a surprise attack from behind the victim. If the attack is successful the victim cannot cry out and to rid himself of the garotte he must throw his attacker (requires a roll of 71+ on the DMG grappling tables) and spend one round unwrapping it and breathing in. During the time the garotte is being applied, the victim takes 1d6 per round cumulative damage (1d6 the first round, 2d6 the second, 3d6 the third...), with no bonus damage for strength (damage is due to oxygen loss, and extra strength will not close off any extra vessels). This damage is subdual damage, one-quarter of which is actual damage - so a victim will be choked into unconciousness before being killed. Unconciousness lasts as many turns as there were d6 of damage on the final round of choking.

Hide in Shadows	Hear Noise	Climb Walls	Read Languages
		82%	
		84%	
10%	10%	85%	(15% as only)
+2	Same	+2	+2

Poison: Instead of merely buying poison and using it as directed, characters with this skill may make their own poisons and know how to use them properly. Instead of learning another weapon skill, an assassin can study according to the DMG, although the training period takes only 5-20 weeks and costs as much as the character should pay to gain his next level. If a character starts the game with Poison skill, of course, it has already been paid for and time allocated. The skill is only taught to assassins or clerics of Livia, Roman goddess of poisoners.

15	*16*	*17*	*18*
0	+5%	+10%	+15%
Half-elf	*Halfling*	*Half-orc*	
0	+5%	−10%	

Assassin's weapon-training has a peculiar slant. Although only as competent in most fights as thieves, the extra time they have spent learning precision in their attacks pays off in two ways. First, even if a normal assassination attempt fails to kill the victim, allow it to count as backstab if a roll to hit succeeds; it is still a precision attack against an unsuspecting victim. A second pay off comes logically from one of the similar special abilities in the rules.

Rangers have a special ability when in combat with giant-class creatures: in melee combat only (when blows can be precisely placed) they do one extra point of damage per level. Considering the differences between dagger-armed kobolds, grappling trolls, and greatsword-wielding cloud giants, this cannot be due to their knowledge of such creatures' fighting-style. It cannot be due to their hatred for them, which would be reflected in the same sort of modifier as dwarves' +1 to hit orcs and wouldn't improve with level. It cannot be due to a divine nudge on the elbow with each blow, for that would also be used to nudge missiles into the right target. It must be because of their knowledge of giant-class creatures' anatomy. And who knows human anatomy best?

Thus, in melee combat assassins cause +1 hit point of damage per level to human-class creatures (humans, elves, half-elves, and half-orcs). This damage is added to the damage caused by a backstabbing attack before it is multiplied for final damage determination.

Spying and Infiltration

Both criminal and combative abilities are important to assassins, but they have a third significant function. Assassins' Guilds are information-gathering groups; the assassin is a spy. Occasionally, he will be hired out to clients and paid the standard Guild rate of 5sp plus 2½sp per level per day) to act like James Bond, or the Guild may want him to do the same sort of job (at the same rate of pay) for them: the sort of task which is often referred to as 'infiltrate, evaluate, exterminate'. More usually, he will be gathering any information to hand, as the Guild pays for information, or maintaining his cover identity as a solid member of society. All these require the same sort of skills: the ability to fit in without appearing out of place. Assassins are thus given more training in infiltration and intelligence-gathering than any other field.

The most important thing to learn for infiltration is body language. It is a well-known fact that if you look as if you belong somewhere, no-one will question your right to be there. This is the simplest use of body language training for experts. More difficult is the reading of people's faces and body language and controlling your own. This is the skill of which assassins are proudest - only illusionists have similar abilities.

An assassin's comprehension of body language is better than that of other men, and they know the signs which give away the speaker's true meaning, giving them a 5% chance per level of detecting lies. Conversely, they know how to control their own body language, giving them a 5% chance per level of convincing a suspicious listener of an unlikely tale (adjust this chance upwards for more plausible stories or less hostile audiences). This ability reduces the chance of a lie being detected by an assassin or illusionist by 2% per level of the liar. It also makes them the best people to use for establishing sign language communications.

Example: Tarash the 6th level assassin has been hired to spy on the army led by the famous tactician Gillana Trusco. Caught by a patrol, he tries to convince its leader that he's a local out hunting. His basic chance of convincing the patrol of this is 6 x 5% = 30%, but the GM rules that since he is appropriately dressed and - having worked here before - can imitate the local accent convincingly, his chance is trebled to 90%. The patrol leader believes him, but explains that he is under orders to bring in anyone he finds outside their own homes, and brings him in for interrogation. It's not Tarash's lucky day - Gillana herself is talking to the officer in charge of interrogating prisoners, and she is covertly a 10th level assassin, which reduces Tarash's chance of fooling her. She has a 50% chance of spotting the lie, minus 8% (for a 4th level assassin) trebled (for its plausibility), which gives her a 26% chance. She rolls 17, and he's in trouble...

Body language is a major contribution to a successful infiltration, but sometimes more is required, and the most common requirement is disguise. Disguise in the *Players Handbook* is a wonderful ability, totally unrelated to level, intelligence, or such minor considerations. Instead, here is a reasonably simple system:

An assassin's basic chance of success-fully disguising himself is 50%, plus 2% per level, plus 5% per point of wisdom and charisma over 14, minus 5% modifier for each point of wisdom and charisma under 8, and with a plus or minus 5% modifier for each point of difference between the intelligence of the assassin and the intelligence of the viewer. Since no-one likes to look a fool, members of a crowd are less likely to question disguises, so a crowd can be treated as if all its members have INT 8. Further modifiers are up to the GM: -40% for a sex-change disguise, -5% per inch of height gained or lost (maximum 3") etc. Other classes may use disguise, in which case thieves have a basic chance of 25%, other characters 5%. If the disguise initially succeeds, its chance of failing will fall at the level suggested in the Players' Handbook, with a further modifier of 2% per day if it only succeeded because of the 'crowd effect' modifier.

Cover Professions

One of the difficulties an assassin faces when trying to infiltrate himself into a situation where he can gain information (or kill someone) is that outsiders are always viewed with a certain amount of suspicion. Most societies are fairly insular and a newcomer is always the first suspect in a murder case or is watched more carefully in political, criminal or economic organisa-tions. For this reason, most assassins have training in some skill which allows them to move around without causing suspicion. A rich merchant arriving in town looks unusual, but not a wandering minstrel. Of course, many assassins have perfectly normal professions as their cover, putting them firmly into society in their home town. Due to the wandering nature of most player-characters, however, the following professions may be more appropriate as covers:

Newstellers are useful covers for assassins arriving in town. They are professional storytellers who arrive in town with news of the goings-on in other towns - gossip about political alliances, economic events (such as a grape blight which will affect this year's crop), and so on - as well as fairytales and exciting histories for children. They will remain in town as long as the market will support them, selling their stories and collecting gossip for the next town. Needless to say, many of the genuine newstellers are working for various Assassins' Guilds anyway! Many assassins have served a year's apprenticeship as Talespinners (as they are often known) and posing as one is second nature to them.

Travelling Minstrels are similar to Talespinners, but while the Talespinners' prime market is the public streets during the day, a minstrel makes most profit in taverns in the evenings. Each has their advantages: no-one will think twice about newstellers eavesdropping and asking questions which would look odd in a minstrel, but minstrels are invited to more interest-ing places, as many people can afford to hire one for a party. The Thieves Guild adventure *The Duke's Ball* includes an assassin/musician who is the regular flautist with the local symphony orchestra! Once at these interesting parties, though, they never learn very much - people with secrets to discuss do so in a quiet corner - ie, far away from the music!

Mercenaries often travel in search of employment, and an assassin's knowledge of weaponry can contribute to the cover, as long as he can use a good mercenary weapon. If he has Dagger, Garotte, and Poison skill his credibility is low. Don't make the mistake of carrying a weapon you're not trained with — professional warriors practice regularly. This cover can also explain the 'hard-eyed' look killers usually acquire.

Attractive female assassins have an obvious approach open to them. Remember that it is usually better to be a lady than a courtesan. If you are attractive to men, they will try to seduce you. Despite what you may have heard about pillow-talk, a man is more likely to be foolish and blab to a girl to impress her with his importance before any 'hanky-panky'. On the other hand, don't be cool and stand-offish - they need some encouragement or they won't put the effort into it! This is, incidentally, an excellent way to assassinate a married man - he isn't going to tell anyone that he's meeting you in a quiet place...

Servants are often able to discover things far more simply than outsiders. Unfortunately, this isn't easy, since servants' jobs are much sought-after, and if your previous employers have a habit of dying while you worked for them references are hard to come by. One Assassins' Guild in my campaign has a business supplying servants for short periods - a kind of medieval temp agency. Although most of their members are straight, a few are assassins, and if entry to a household is needed they are prepared to poison the staff of the target house to lay them low for a few days, apparently with a mild illness. A suitably qualified assassin can then be hired to replace them. And, naturally, there are several assassins in the crowd if footmen and so forth are hired en masse for a party. One of the Guild's most strict rules is that the servant cover must not be used for theft or assassination (although reconnaisance for them is the main point of the cover) as a safeguard the agency's reputation.

Dressmakers, hairdressers, and so forth are not good covers for assassins, since they must be constantly available during normal working hours (and must work hard to have enough business to look as if you're making a living at it). It's a 'sleeper' cover, not be be breached for many years. However, they are often in the pay of the Guild as informers for their knowledge of the goings-on of the upper classes gleaned from the gossip of their clients.

Assassin Psychology

Assassins are, generally speaking, callous people who don't care that their actions will hurt people — families of victims, the people on whom they are spying, and so on. This is the reason that they are Neutral or Evil in alignment. Their own view of themselves is that they are a group of highly skilled professionals (which, of course, they are), able to perform any kind of work. Being part of this great brother-hood is a matter of great pride (but not boasting, as nothing will get you thrown out of the Guild faster than a loose mouth) and thus they have a great deal of Guild spirit. A Guildless assassin is a poor shadow of his former self, much as an elderly warrior misses the cameraderie of the barracks after he has retired to his dream cottage. On the other hand, an assassin in his home town has more support from his home Guild (in this case, 'home town' and 'Guild' means where he as taken up permanent residence, not necessarily his original home) than any other class, which is why they cheerfully pay far higher Guild fees than anyone else. A twentieth of all an assassin's legal earnings (the normal amount for Guild fees in any class of character) are handed over to the Guild. Illegal earnings are taxed at the much stiffer rate of 40% at first level, decreasing by 5% per level to a minimum of 5% at 8th level and beyond. For comparison, most thieves' guilds demand a flat rate on all income for all levels, usually 10-15%, but occasionally as high as 20%. However, this means that the Assassins' Guild has no need to charge extra for training, so assassins are trained free in their local Guildhouses. If they train at another House, the cost is deducted from what they owe in tithe to their home House.

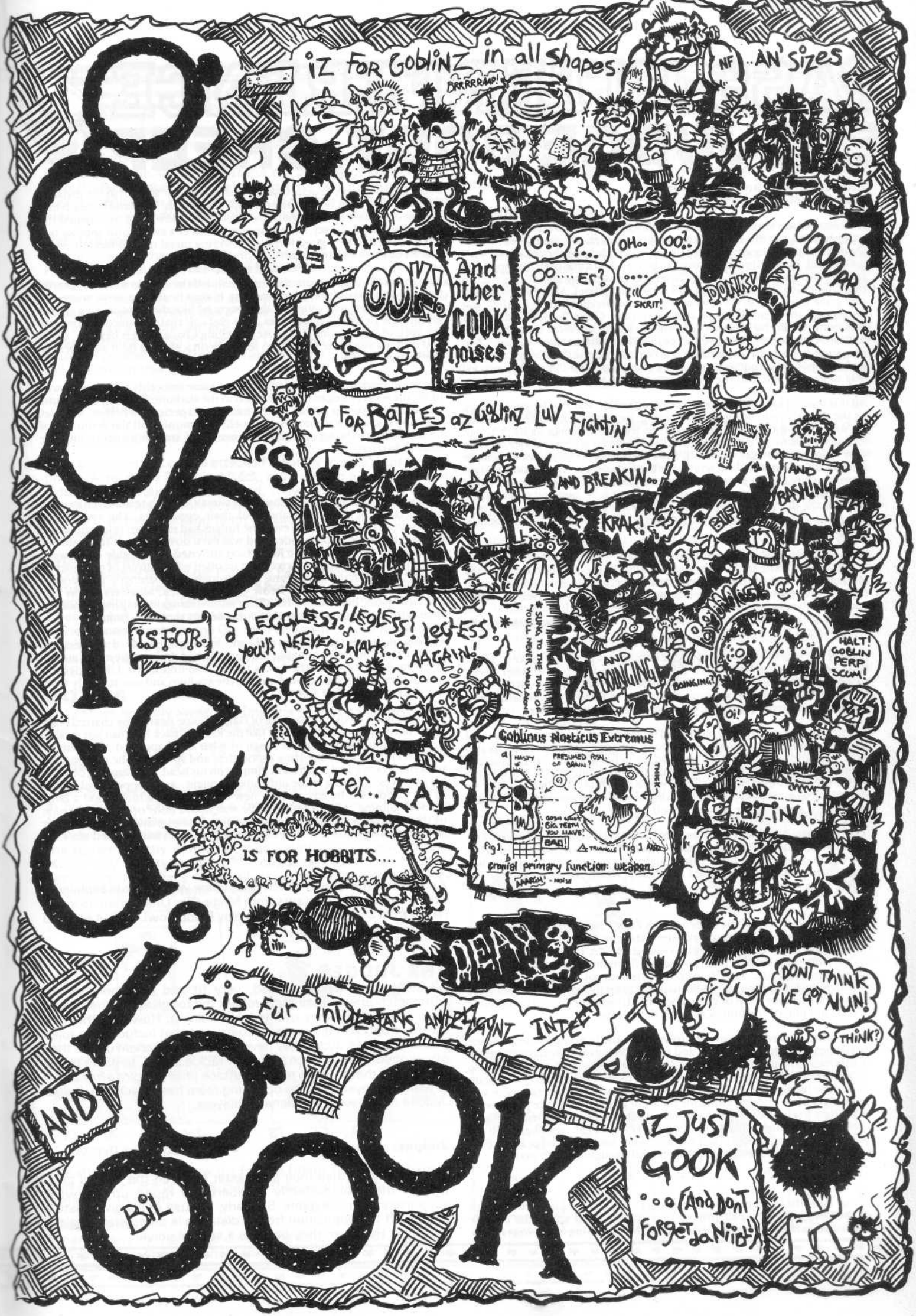
The current rules on the Guild reaction to a change of leadership are too extreme, and designed for the early American-style 'dungeon' campaigns, with huge treasures and tiny moral codes. A change of local Guildmaster will result in 3% of the Guild's members leaving town due to disagreements with the new Boss. A prime Assassin (13th level) who doesn't wish to assassinate his Guildmaster (after all, they've been friends and workmates for years) should be more common in modern campaigns than the thugs envisioned in the rule books. When a character reaches 14th level (assuming that his current Guildmaster is 14th), he will feel that there is little more he can achieve in his present location, and move to another town which lacks a ranking Guildmaster. Fifteen per cent of the members of his home Guild will follow him if he offers the traditional incentive of 50gp plus 5gp per level to each assassin coming with him. Within six months of his arrival, 10% of his new Guild will move to other Guilds (none of the people who came with him will move out, except in unusual circumstances) because they don't like the way the new Boss is running the Guild. Traditionally, the previous leader of the Guild is first to go, gaining a level in the process.

The Grandfather of Assassins is a revered senior Guildmaster, and it is an elective post which is held for life (assassinations by ambitious Guildmasters are not unknown, if they think they can win enough support to gain the post). Only Guildmasters are entitled to vote for the new Grandfather, in much the same way as Cardinals vote for the Pope. On election it is a Guild tradition that the new Grandfather gives a goodwill bonus from his personal pocket to all members of his Guilds. Each person gets 5gp plus 2½gp per level, which costs the new Grandfather around 30,000gp. There is a 5% chance per year of a new Grandfather taking office (if so, there is a 5% chance he'll be dead within six months).

In keeping with their professional reputations, assassins have a horror of sloppy work and are meticulous in the planning of their operations. They try their best to cover every possibility in their plans, for in their trade attention to detail keeps them alive.

And therein lies the difference. The black-clad thug we met in an alleyway at the start of this article may be an *assassin* in the dictionary sense, but he is no ***Assassin***!

Chris Felton


gobbledigook
iZ FOR GOBLINZ in all shapes.. AN' sizes
BRRRRRAAP!
-is for
OOK!
And other GOOK noises
O?.. ?... OH.. OO?..
OO.... Er?
.... SKRIT!
DONKS!
OOOOPP
iZ FOR BATTLES az GOBLINZ LUV FIGHTIN'
'S
AND BREAKIN'..
KRAK!
BIF
AND BASHING
IS FOR.
♫ LEGGLESS! LEGLESS? LEGLESS! * YOU'LL NEEVER WALK... or AAGAIN! ♪
* SUNG TO THE TUNE OF "YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE"
AND BOINGING
BOINGING!
HALT! GOBLIN PERP SCUM!
OI!
Goblinus Nasticus Extremus
NASTY
PRESUMED POSN. OF BRAIN?
THICK
GOSH WOW! BIG TEETH YOU HAVE!
BAD!
TRIANGLE
Fig 1.
Fig 1 ABOVE
cranial primary function: weapon
AARGH! - NOISE
~ is Fer.. 'EAD
AND BITING!
IS FOR HOBBITS....
DEAD
io
~is Fur intuLIGENS AND LAGYNZ INTELLIGENT
DONT THINK I'VE GOT NUN!
THINK?
AND
BIL
GOOK
..iZ JUST GOOK ...(And DonT Forget da Niidl)

PASS-INTERFERENCE
EAT JUDGE BOOT, CREEP.

Judges in Blood Bowl, by Lewis Foti, Marc Gascoigne & Jervis Johnson

It all started one season late in the Fourth Age when the Darkwood Reavers were headed for the Blood Bowl trophy. A dark elf team, they prided themselves that they could score that third touchdown the third time they got the ball. Many a time this proved to be true, and more than one opposing team found itself out-played by the elvish passing game (not to mention their punching, kicking, biting and scratching game). And now, with just one game to go, the Reavers were tied for the division title with their last opponents, the fiendish, despicable, dirty, slimy Chaos Raiders. A team that was home to all the most vicious, the meanest, the most unwanted, the foulest. A team of orcs who weren't beyond including an ogre or three when the going got tough! A team famed above all else for their tough defence and their powerful running game. They too could boast that all they needed was to get the ball into their possession three times.

All this was not lost on Reavers veteran head coach, War Ron Moon. Standing by the practice field one moonlit evening, he watched as his team worked on some new formations that would be tried in the final game. Though he hated to admit it, if his team could not come up with a tougher defence they were going to get flattened. What was needed was some defensive muscle, an immovable line which his team could use as the spring board from which to launch their deadly passing game. A defensive line that could grind those orcs (and those ogres with the stick-on ears and green make-up) into the dirt! But no elf would sink so low as to perform such a role. Become a defender, a mud-groveller? Never! Where was the joy, the beauty, the glory in that?

With this in mind Moon pondered the problem. As a drowning elf will grasp at any twig in a stream, so the coach finally decided to visit the old dark elf mage, Terr Ewo Gann. Gann was a being of great learning and considerable powers who - although getting on bit even by elven standards and prone to talking at length about things nobody could understand - was still one of the most powerful necromancers about. Furthermore, he was a big Reavers fan.

Luckily the journey to Gann's seaside dwelling was not a long one, and it was just past midnight when War Ron Moon reined in his wolf. After a brief word with his mount about the dangers to its masculinity of sneaking off for a bit of surrepticious howling and slaying while he was gone, the coach started up the winding path to the sorcerer's decrepit house.

The necromancer had aged recently. The burden of the years - and several flagons of mushroom brandy - showed in his appearance, but he was still alert, his violet eyes were still clear, and about his wizened frame there still hung a subtle aura that threatened of the power he could wield. When Moon had finished his explanation, Gann sat for a while and then, slowly, he stood, accompanied only by the cracking of well-used joints and the distant howling of a soon-to-be neutered wolf.

'I can try.' His voice was quiet and dry. 'It is clear that the solution does not exist on this world. I shall have to search on other planes; on other worlds, in other times, there I shall find you your players. Now begone, but return in three nights, when we shall perform the summoning...'

* * *

It was the grand final of the Utterly Gross Fatty Challenge Cup. This year's teams, the Normous Person Devourers and the Franky Scott Fitzgerald Consumers, were locked in greedy combat. Before them lay the remains of two large robo-homes. Their stomachs' incredible digestive juices were already tackling the mouth-watering mixture of plasteen, celloseal, synthicrete and various lubricants that had been the meal. The rules were simple - whichever team of eleven behemoths was the first to completely devour the pile of inedible scrap was the winner.

Around the packed stadium the crowd was noisily going bananas. Some had come to watch the spectacle, and were cheering on their favourite team. Others had come to protest at such a disgusting spectacle, and were parading up and down with banners. Over everything there watched the ever-vigilant eyes of the Judges. Somewhere in the seething morass of people there was an assassin, they knew, waiting for the right moment to make a protest as old as time itself. Some used their eyes, others image intensifiers, and one, a pale, delicate young blonde, scarcely more than a girl, searched with the awesome psychic powers of her extraordinary mind. Psi-Judge Robertson scanned the crowd, feeling for the warped thoughts of the assassin.

* * *

To cast aside the burden of mortal existence, Terr Gann rejoiced, was worth all the preparation and sacrificing. His spirit soared above the strange landscape, probing the new world around him, seeking out beings to take a starring role in the crucial championship decider. Way off in the distance a mental light went on and his spirit sped forwards. The land beneath him changed, becoming mountainous and barren. How long he pursued the feeling he could not say, but as the necromancer's astral form approached what seemed to be a giant forest of towering metal trees, a fantastic sight spread out before him.

Two teams of vast uniformed beings occupied the centre of what appeared to be an immense Blood Bowl stadium. It must be the pre-game warm-up, the sorcerer surmised - after all, there were no bloodied bodies lying strewn around the field! His search was at an end - all that was needed now was the spell of summoning. Let those snivelling Chaos Raiders beware - never had such an awesome team been let loose on a playing field anywhere in the known world!

The mind-mangling words of summoning came smoothly to his lips. A web of arcane sorcery began to descend on to the stadium. But then there came a challenge, a power unlike any he had ever experienced before. A power that was resisting his summoning spell! Summoning all the resources of his art, Terr Ewo Gann cast his spell once more, straining to overcome the sinister barrier!

* * *

The final had reached its side-bursting climax, as both teams tried to cram in the last few mouthfuls ahead of their opponents. The crowd was screaming itself hoarse, and even the Judges had reason to celebrate as the assassin had been apprehended and was even now gazing at the inside of an iso-cube. Suddenly Judge Robertson stiffened as a deathly chill swept over the stadium. She shuddered, and recoiled with a thrust of pure mental energy. The presence shrank and then redoubled its strength. Desperately she sent out all her barriers, strove to drive it back, whatever it was. For minutes, hours, days maybe, the silent, unseen struggle hung in the balance, then with a cry Judge Robertson collapsed to the floor, beaten.

Gann's spirit felt the barriers fall, and his mighty spell of summoning encircled the playing pitch. But the struggle had drained the mage, and he could no longer control the forces that he had unleashed. Like a gigantic pair of claws, his magic closed around the stadium and tore it bodily from the reality in which it stood...

War Ron Moon awoke in the ruins of Gann's house next to the charred body of the necromancer. His brain felt like the Raiders' back four had just tackled it, and he couldn't remember much of what had happened. One minute the sorcerer's body was sitting motionless and spiritless, the next minute something heavy had apparently jumped on his head. He staggered outside, his pale eyes squinting in the unfamiliar sunlight - and stopped dead. There in the middle of the bay stood a new island, upon which stood a large domed building. All was quiet. As he watched, a door opened in the side of the building and the most gigantic Blood Bowl player Moon had ever seen staggered into view. The necromancer's spell had worked after all!

* * *

And such is the legend which goes some way towards explaining how a bunch of inhabitants from Mega-City One turned up in the New World and just happened to play Blood Bowl. Well, it seemed a good idea at the time.

THE JUDGES

All Judges are highly trained, very fit and extremely tough. Although humans, their stats reflect the tough world they come from and fifteen years of intensive training. However, they are sworn to uphold the Law at all costs, and that includes the rules of *Blood Bowl*. A Judge may never attack an opponent unless they attack them first, though they may tackle at will. In game terms this means that a Judge may not attack until the turn *after* a turn in which a player from the opposing team has attacked a Judge. Judges may never be defensive players.

	MA	*CS*	*TS*	*ST*	*TH*	*WD*	*AT*	*CL*
Judges	4	4	4	3	4	2	1	9

Judges may not use their lawmaster bikes on the field of play, though they are perfectly at liberty to round up wayward supporters after the game. Similarly, the use of lawgiver pistols to pick off the opposition from a distance is completely against the rules. However, they do have a special power.

The Challenge
A Judge may challenge a player to 'Stop in the name of the Law'. If a player moves within three squares of the Judge, he may challenge them to stop. A tackle roll is made, but taking Cool as its characteristic. If it is successful the Judge's opponent must stop; if it fails he may continue moving. Only one Judge may make such a challenge in each movement or reserve movement phase (not *both* in one turn), and it only works on one player at a time.

Psi-Judges
Judges may not have Star Player Points, but they may have one Psi-Judge. Psi-Judges, like Judge Robertson from our story, have the additional ability to attack an opponent mentally. To reflect this in game terms, if the Judge is adjacent to an opponent and neither attacks or tackles them, and after any attack or tackle back, they can attempt a Psychic Attack, which is handled like a tackle, but cross-referencing Cool (CL) against Cool (if an opposing player has a Cool of greater than 10 count it as 10). If the attack is successful roll one die on this table:

1	No effect
2-4	Stunned
5	KO'd
6	Mind Wiped (treat as a Fractured Skull)

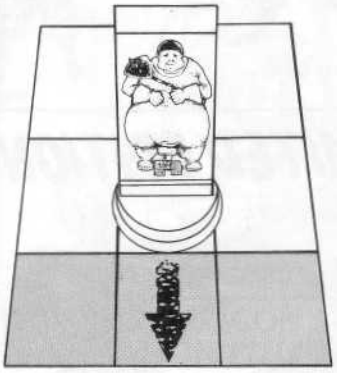
Only one opponent can be attacked mentally in a particular tackle phase. After every Psychic Attack, roll a die. On a 6 the Judge is exhausted and must be substituted. They can return after the next Touchdown. This is a very potent power in the right hands, so you should give the opposing team an extra Star Player Point. Psi-Judges may make challenges.

Typical Team
A typical Judge team is the Patrolling Perpbashers, which features some of the top players in the blood Bowl, including Judge Riggins, Judge Payton and Judge Fridge (transferred from the Orange Bay Obesities fatty team last season). Managed by their no-nonsense stoney-faced coach, Judge Git, the Perpbashers are a tough team of lawmen, though more noted for arresting referees for bad decisions than for scoring touchdowns.

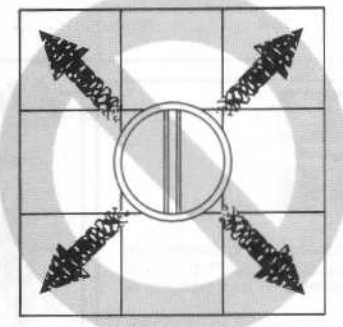
FATTIES
The Fatties are truly awesome. Imagine trying to stop a runaway truck with legs! These are the stats for Fatties:

	MA	*CS*	*TS*	*ST*	*TH*	*WD*	*AT*	*CL*
Fatties	3/0	4	0	4	4	2	1	3

There are several unusual things about Fatties. Unlike other players in Blood Bowl, Fatties have a *facing* which is important in the following special rules. A Fatty must always be facing a certain direction when they are standing. Fatties are assumed to be facing the square directly in front of their counter (if it is not obvious which way a Fatty is facing the opposing coach may decide). Fatties may never face diagonally (see the diagram below). They also never get Star Player Points.



△ **FACING DIAGRAM 1**



△ **FACING DIAGRAM 2**

The shaded squares show the Fatty's Death Zone, and where he may move, attack or tackle. A Fatty may never face diagonally as shown on the right.

Movement
When a Fatty moves either directly forward, or on to one of the two diagonals ahead of them they have a move of 3, and their facing remains the same (in other words the Fatty counter in the new square, facing in the same direction as it was originally). They may change their facing so that they are facing a new direction as long as they do not move during the phase. If a Fatty is used as a defensive player only their forward movement rate is adjusted (from 3 to 2).

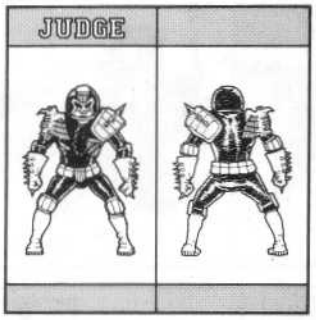
Tackles and Attacks
Fatties can only tackle or attack the three squares directly and diagonally in front of them - see the diagram. If they themselves are attacked or tackled from any other square the Fatty cannot retaliate. A prone Fatty may never attack or tackle. When a prone Fatty stands up he may be faced in any direction the coach wishes.

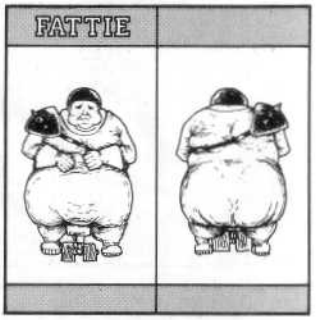
Roll Over
If a Fatty attacks a prone player they can perform a Roll Over attack. To do this they attack in such a way as to exploit their fantastic bulk. Resolve the attack in the normal way, but if a hit is scored roll TWICE on the wound table. The fatty has just sat on his opponent - splat!

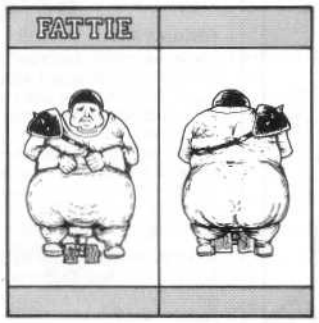
Push Back
Instead of tackling an opponent, a Fatty may elect to try to push them back. Roll on the tackle table as usual. If the tackle is successful the Fatty has succeeded in pushing his opponent back one square and in knocking them over (ie, making them prone). The opposing player must move directly back along the line of push (ie, diagonally if the push was diagonal). If the appropriate square is full the player in that square gets pushed back too, and so on, but only the player who was tackled is knocked over. Players pushed off the field must wait a turn and then come on at the nearest free square to where they exited. After the push the Fatty can move into square vacated by the pushed player, as long as they haven't been tackled or attacked by an opponent. Fatties can only perform a Push Back in their own Tackle phase.

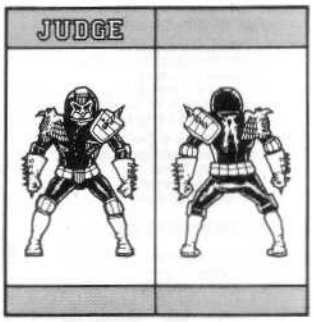
Typical Team
The Orange Bay Obesities are possibly the grossest team ever to play in the league, and indeed calls for their banning have already been received from various halfling and snotling teams. Their voluminous star player, Bouncin' Billy Munce, holds the record for the largest number of spectators and players squashed in a season, a record he celebrated by singlehandedly eating the team's tour-caravan.

Assemble your Judge and Fatty players by photocopying, colouring and gluing the ones presented here, use the card characters given with the ***Judge Dredd RPG*** *or* ***Judgement Day****, or use miniatures from Citadel's extensive Judge Dredd range.*









GRIM'S · REAPER

Snotling Pump Wagon War Machine

Tap, tap, tap, tap. Hammer, hammer, hammer, hammer. Hammer, hammer, *thunk*.

"AAAARRRRGH!!!"

Grim Warspanner was having a very bad day. It would turn out to be a day which would change his whole life, but he didn't pause to reflect on this as he danced around his workshop clutching his flattened thumb. Even Breakface, his old and fould-mouthed parrot, winced as Grim swore steadily for three minutes without repeating himself.

"Wash your mouth out," it squawked, as Grim paused for breath, "Wash your mouth... FAWWK!!"

"And you can shut up, as well," growled the Dwarf, as the parrot climbed unsteadily back onto its perch. It cowered as he went to retrieve his hammer.

Grim's black mood was lifted slightly by the patter of small feet outside his workshop door.

"Ere, Grim," called a high-pitched voice from outside, "You in?" Grim opened the door, and was confronted by a small, green-skinned figure, clutching a sack that was almost as big as itself.

"Got stuff," it squeaked, "You got stuff?" Grim went back into his workshop and up-ended a small sack. A couple of pounds of nails fell out onto the floor - Grim had flattened them with a sledgehammer and ground them to a sharp edge, creating several dozen tiny knives. The Snotling picked one up, examined the blade, and stuck it in its loincloth with a toothy grin.

"Good stuff," it said, "Ere." It tiped out its own sack, and a shower of small, brightly-coloured mushrooms cascaded onto the floor. Grim popped one in his mouth, and a smile slowly across his face.

"Ere, Grim," the Snotling broke into his reverie, "Wotzat?"

"My latest invention," said Grim, walking over to the wooden, cartlike object he had been working on, "A combination of a pump-operated horseless truck and a grain-cutting machine, adapted for use on the battlefield." Seeing the look of blank incomprehension on the Snotling's face, he repeated his explanation, using a mixture of pantomime and very short words.

"This," he said indicating the rocker-pump on top of the cart, "Up, down." He began to work the pump, and the machine moved forward a little way, the spiked roller on the front spinning rapidly.

"Kills lots," he continued, miming being run down and swept under the roller, "Aarg, splat." The Snotling's eyes were wide with awe.

"Aargh, splat," it said, in hushed tones, "Coorrr!"

Later that night, Grim was awoken from a peaceful sleep by a tremendous splintering crash from the direction of his workshop. He reached the window just in time to see the silhouette of his invention disappearing over the hill. Two Snotlings were working the pump mechanism furiously, and several more were hanging off the sides.

Grim's Reaper was stolen from its creator, the Dwarven Engineer Grim Warspanner, by a group of Snotlings, who blazed a trail of destruction across a wide tract of forest before they encountered the Orcs of the Splintered Bone tribe. After some not entirely bloodless negotiations, the machine and its Snotling crew were pressed into service as allies, and the machine saw action in several battles, disrupting enemy lines as the Orcs closed for combat.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W
*	0	0	6	6	6

I	A	Ld	Int	Cl	WP
0	1	As crew			

The machine requires a minimum crew of 2. Starting from rest, its M rises by 1 point per turn up to a maximum of 6, the machine always moves its full movement allowance. Deceleration causes M to drop by 1 point per turn, and turn it (which requires a total of 10 S). Any figure struck by the spiked roller as the machine ploughs across the battlefield takes 1 automatic S 6 hit as it runs them down.

Points Value: 150 (including crew)

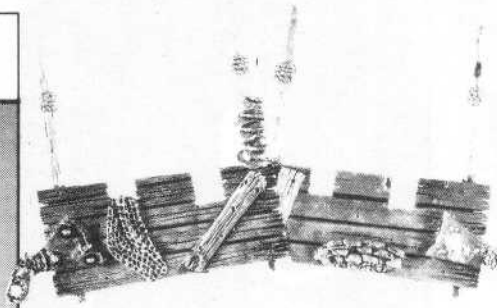
Crew - 6 or 10 Snotlings

M	WS	BS	S	T	W
4	1	2	1	1	1

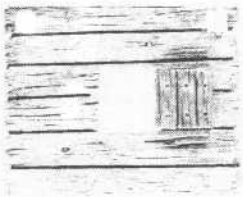
I	A	Ld	Int	Cl	WP
3	1	4	4	4	4

THE COMPLETE SNOTLING PUMP WAGON £5.00

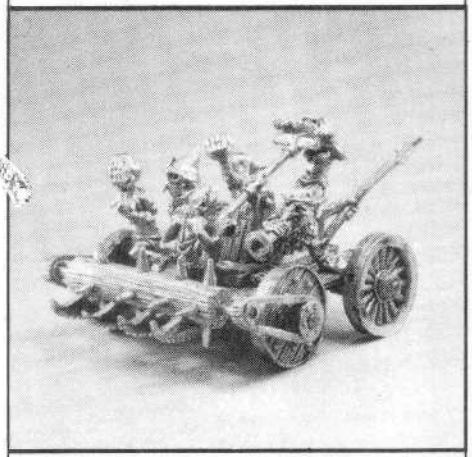
BASIC WAGON *PLUS* EXPANSION *PLUS* 2 CREW *PLUS* 10 RANDOMLY ASSORTED RIDERS



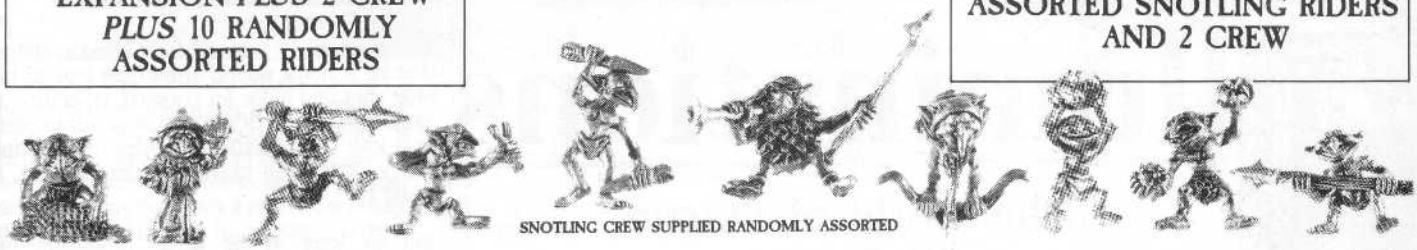
EXPANSION SET £1.95



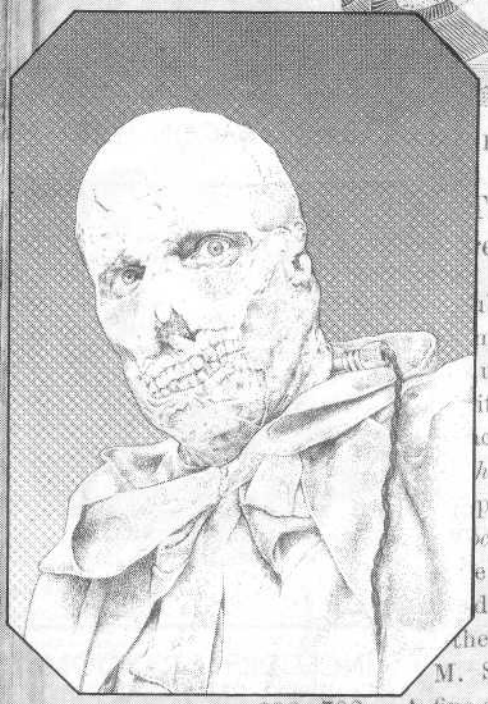
BASIC WAGON £2.50



INCLUDES 4 RANDOMLY ASSORTED SNOTLING RIDERS AND 2 CREW



SNOTLING CREW SUPPLIED RANDOMLY ASSORTED



Illuminations

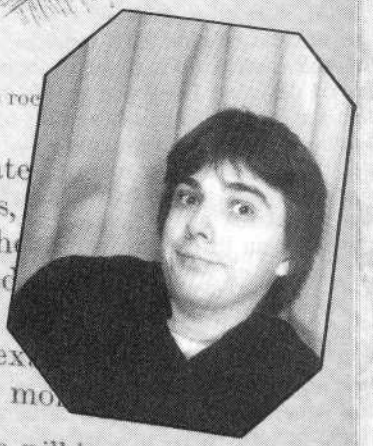
The World of Martin McKenna

This talented 17 year old from London claims that he is not a weirdo artist. Just look at his mug shot and judge for yourself. Of course, it could be a diet of '30s and '40s horror movies, or a love of illustrations by Virgil Finlay and Harry Clarke that has made him like that. *It could be.*

But as long as he keeps producing his wonderful illustrations, with their strong use of light and heavy shadows...does that matter?

Fig. 249.—Inversion and Thrust-plane

250.—Fan-shaped structure, Central Alps.
limestone ; *j*, Brown Jura and Lias ; *t*, Trias ; *s*, Schistose roc



(1891), p. 283.

Martin's work on fanzines such as *Die Rubezalc* and *Dagon* drew our attention to him, in particular his work with Bryan Lumley on *Return to Arkham*. Commissioned to produce some illustrations for *Warlock* and *White Dwarf*, Martin impressed us with his attention to detail and the textural quality of his drawings.

Working with pencil and pen on the same picture, Martin creates an evocative mood of gothic horror. He was a natural choice to illustrate *Green & Pleasant Land*, the *Call of Cthulhu* sourcebook for Britain in the 20s. Some of the results you can see here, but this is far from the last time that we shall see his work...

John Blanche

White Dwarf has been known to get the occasional nice letter. Occasionally, like once in a blue moon, not very often, hardly at all. OK, we don't get any nice letters. Nobody loves us. Sob...

But that's not important. This is:

Greg Costikyan, West End Games Inc: To my disappointment, *The Price of Freedom* has not engendered the degree of inflammatory controversy for which I had hoped. Nothing makes more entertaining reading than venomously-fanged commentary, yet even the protest letters *White Dwarf* has published have been calm, collected and intelligent.

The most vituperative statement on the game I have seen appeared in an editorial reply to a letter in issue 87 of your magazine. Though I would otherwise have been delighted with its tone (no publicity is bad publicity, after all), it makes a claim that I'm afraid I cannot let stand unanswered.

To wit, it states that 'the designer of the games has admitted that he wrote the game purely and simply to make money, to prey on the gullibility of right-thinking American gamers...' This is, in fact, a misinterpretation of a statement taken out of context.

First, let it be noted that I am a professional. Professionals do things for money. Certainly I designed *The Price of Freedom* for money. Since I have bills to pay, to do otherwise would be quite foolish. The fact that I *can* make a living as a game designer is a matter of some pride to me, as few can do so. I recognise that, in Britain, commercial motives are viewed with a disdain to which they are not subject in America; I, at least, do not consider them dishonourable.

As for 'preying on the gullibility of right-thinking Americans' - as a 'right-thinking American' myself, I have no particular desire to 'prey on the gullibility' of others. I believe *The Price of Freedom* has a lot to recommend it as a roleplaying experience. It poses dramatic ethical dilemmas - in an occupied nation, the price of freedom can be very steep. It provides sophisticated support for genuine characterisation - *POF* characters are true individuals, not killing machines. It incorporates a wealth of modern weapons data. I think few purchasers, right- or left-thinking, will feel gulled by *The Price of Freedom's* contents. It provides value for money and the opportunity for considerable drama; what more can one expect from a roleplaying game?

Your editor also notes that 'I personally feel it is a fantasy game, but a very unpleasant one.' *That* comment I have no quarrel with; it's a free world, after all, or at least, those bits on this side of the Iron Curtain are. Every one is entitled to his own opinion.

No arguments from me, and apologies for the tone that was taken in the editorial comment. Fact is, Greg is one of the best designers in the biz. Some of the rest of us wouldn't mind if we could earn our livings by playing, erm, designing games all the time...

And then:

J P J Garner, The Labyrinthe Club, London: Your recent comments about Real Life Roleplaying put me in a very awkward position. Labyrinthe's adverts in *White Dwarf* gained us two thousand additional members in as many hours. Yet on the other hand because you treat real life roleplaying in such a derogatory manner it is necessary to make a complaint.

White Dwarf does not understand real life roleplaying and deep down you are afraid that it could be enjoyable and even better than moving pieces of lead across a cardboard surface.

I hereby challenge you to send a *White Dwarf* team to a Labyrinthe adventure, with my compliments, if I do not hear anything from you within one month I shall assume you wish to remain in ignorance and will inform my four thousand plus membership of your refusal.

Oooh! First a challenge, then a threat. But when I checked around the office, I was quite staggered to find that some of the normal-looking Games Workshop types (and a few of the others) were closet loonies and quite proud of it. A frothing of gibbering psychopaths may very well be despatched. To reiterate my views on the subject: LRP has the same relationship to roleplaying as re-enactment societies (The Sealed Knot etc) have to tabletop wargaming. To compare the two, or imagine a direct connection, is a real chalk-and-cheese exercise. But if you think it's fun, I'm not going to stop you hitting each other with rubber swords. OK? That's what I thought it was all about anyway... Fun, I mean.

Another swift sidestep to:

Sheleea, Norwalk, California: Like, Oh my Gosh! 86-1! Sounds like good odds to me. I am, of course, referring to the Readers' Poll in which the boys outnumber us feminine type people 86-1! We can handle it! I'd just like to know how many of the 61 females involved in the Readers Poll became involved in RPGs because of one of the 5259 guys? I for one shyly raise my hand. And out of the 29 roleplayers I have personally adventured with four of them are female (including myself). And for all you girls who don't play RPGs and have boyfriends who do, get with it! With the odds at 86-1 you're sure to be the centre of attention. A lot of things can happen in six hours of game time.

Sheleea also sent us 1206 teeny weeny dollars (see above, reproduced at original size). Hmmm. I don't understand.

This Letters Page is developing a transatlantic bent. Dave Morris' opinions in White Dwarf 86 stirred yet another American reader to put pen to paper.

Blaise Borchers, Westerville, Ohio: I've just finished reading the letters page of my January *White Dwarf*. As a consumer, I am concerned by the *opinions* stated by Mr D Morris and Mr Harry Robertson.

I, too, have opinions about the content of *White Dwarf*, Games Workshop publications and the style of Citadel Miniatures. I quite like them. If Mr Morris has the opposite opinion, I'm sorry; I do not believe his argument is helped by the use of perjorative, insulting labels on material which I (and I hope others) enjoy.

I treat Games Workshop as a producer of goods which I want - games, scenarios, beautiful (*opinion!*) artwork and exquisite (*opinion!*) figures. One of the primary reasons for my interest in Games Workshop's goods is their variety and speedy availability. I am a consumer: I was rather hoping for commercialism, and am will to pay for it.

Right, enough transatlantic bent, and back to domestic matters:

Pete Tamlyn, Aylesbury: I would like make use of your letter column to issue a public apology to West Ham United Football Club and its supporters for the gross slur on the good name of the club in *Green & Pleasant Land*. I gather that the comment in question was

inserted into the text by one of the lesser goblins at the Design Studio who wished to irritate Games Workshop's resident EastEnder, Paul Cockburn. Unfortunately, this addition to the text was not spotted in time to remove it before publication. I trust that the goblin in question has been fed to the Mail Order Trolls...

I'd like to apologise to West Ham supporters as well.

It must be awful for them.

*Allan Miles' article **More Than Skin Deep** (WD85) continues to generate quite a response.*

Neil Prideaux, Ilfracombe, Devon: Both Mr Miles and Nigel Cole (WD86) have got it wrong. To compare half-elves with budgerigars is daft. The only difference between budgies tends to be their colour and size (although I may be wrong) and Nigel's table works only for these minor differences.

The differences between elves and humans are far more dramatic. Their external similarities would still permit cross-breeding, but their half-elf offspring would be infertile hybrids.

Nigel Cole, Perth: Concerning your somewhat simplistic view on 'simple heredity': the application of basic Mendelian genetics for a single allele controlled phenotype to a half-elf x half-elf cross is entirely misplaced and inappropriate. The inheritance of basic racial characters is controlled through multiple point loci, and although different human races have been shown to vary in only a small percent of the three billion base pairs on the genome, where characteristics are as diverse as infravision and basic frame alterations one could hardly expect a specific 'all or nothing' segregation in the first fillial generation.

Incidentally, the article is the first for a long time that has inspired me to take any views on your proposed ideas. I would say, though, that I disagree completely with this idea of game balance, players should pick races because they want to roleplay them, not because they have a better survivability. This sort of article inspires bad roleplaying and encourages GMs to attempt to interpret the labyrinthine system that is D&D and play it 'fairly'. Life, and this is a direct interpretation thereof, is not fair!

Jamie Revell, Hull: Much as I hate to disagree with Nigel Cole (WD86), I must point out that he is in error - and for the following reasons:

Whilst the results of an F_1 backcross or an F_2 generation involving the breeding of two incompletely dominant genes of the same allele would indeed produce the results he quotes, it remains that the total morphology of the elf, and indeed its physiological processes (eg the possession of a fourth variant of iodopsin in the cones of its retina), would indicate a phenotype sufficiently complex as to be easily explicable by a postulation of a polygenetic mechanism. To explain this further, I quote the following from *Genetics* by Monroe W Strickburger (MacMillan, 1976):

'Many multiple factors... cannot be individually isolated because their effects are usually too small to be traced. Also, their observed quantitative effects may arise as "side effects" of genes that are concerned with other processes. Because of these and other limitations, it is generally agreed that many of these genes are not identifiable as factors in the original sense... *polygenes* are defined as genes with a small effect on a particular factor that can supplement each other to produce observed quantitative changes. Some of these quantitative effects can be considered... to produce phenotypes which are the sum total of the negative and positive effects of individual polygenes.'

I hope this clears the matter up.

Seems perfectly clear to me.

Daniel Fugallo, London: Exactly how do you class a 'minority game'? What are the 'mainstream' games? *AD&D*, of course, but what about *RQ, JD, CoC* and the rest; do they qualify? I ask because I'm interested in what point you decide a game is popular enough to feature even once. I am an avid follower of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and Other Strangeness. Fracas* described the game as a 'surprise hit' but, despite this wasn't it enough of a hit to feature?

The working definition we use for a major game system is pragmatic, and one that you budding contributors out there can use for yourselves.

Pick a games shop, any games shop, and look at what's on the shelves. Any game that's on several feet of shelf space is a 'mainstream' roleplaying game. A 'minority game' usually can't be found at all - or there are two rather aged boxes on a bottom shelf somewhere...

WD covers mainstream games in preference to any others - after all, more people are playing them. Over the course of a year, we will cover some minority systems as well, but we can only print articles on minority games if we get sent them...

Gareth Elms, Manchester: On my Thrud I managed to balance: 4 ogres, 4 Blood Bowl players, a troll, a giant, 2 bards, 2 warlords, a minotaur, 12 paint brushes...

Oh.

That again.

Look, the rules for miniature blancing should be made clear to one and all. Qantity is not regarded as the epitome of the noble hobby of balancing miniatures. Claims to have balanced the entire set of Citadel Design Loonies on a Thrud cannot be taken seriously, nor can preposterous claims to have done the same with elements of the German Army, Ford Sierras (unbelievable) or anything else (the family cat, for example). The use of blow torches, super glue, bits of chewing gum and the like to hold the edifice together is also frowned upon, as is hammering the miniatures flat before attempting any feats of balancing.

Personally, I'm beginning to have doubts whether anybody has actually balanced anything on anything. But I always did have a suspicious nature.

*The subject of comic strips in **White Dwarf** attracted these pithy comments:*

Neil Grant, Ynysbwl, Mid Glamorgan: *Derek the Troll* struck me as a waste of a page. It was a predictable, boring space filler - about the only good joke was the 'Warlock Magazine RIP' gag. *Thrud* was more or less the same. Why don't you drop the cartoons - after all, WD is a gaming magazine, not a comic.

Paul Wheeler, Benson, Oxon: The new feature you have placed in your magazine of *Derek the Troll* is not quite what I expect from WD. It is silly and childish. While I don't wish to slag off the skill of the artist, I do think it has been drawn in a style usually found in the *Beano*. The fact that the troll's previous magazine is dead doesn't mean that WD's readers have to endure him too.

I much prefer *Gobbledigook*. He is ignorant, likes battles and is funny (at times).

A Rabid Gook Fan, Liskeard, Cornwall: There I was, chewing meditatively on a well-grilled hobbit with an unread copy of WD87 in front of me. Right, first things first. Gook!

Looking down the list of contents what do I see? No Gobbledigook!!! Instead, something that claims to be *Derek the Troll*. Bring back Gook (and Nibbl) OR ELSE!

Chris Malhuan, Louth, Lincs: How could even the most grossly Chaos-twisted mind conceive that...

*Like I said, pithy. Actually, it was my grossly Chaos-twisted mind that conceived the idea of moving Derek from **Warlock** - with some little-needed encouragement from Marc Gascoigne. I thought (and still think) that Derek was a worthy addition to **White Dwarf**. I seem to remember that **Gobbledigook** was given a reception which was lukewarm at best when it started.*

***Derek the Troll** is very well drawn, funny and - at its best - silly. But what's wrong with being silly?*

Random Comments by Mike Brunton